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The Fatimid Armenians
Cultural & Political Interaction in the Near East

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Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East

BY

SETA B. DADOYAN



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To the memory of my father
Grigor H. Barsoumian

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INTRODUCTION

The basic thesis of this study is that what is known as the Armenian period in the last century of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt (1074–1163) was not merely a transitory episode but was rather the last large scale phase in the perpetual alliance between the Armenian sectarians and the Muslims. Viewed in a broader context, the phenomenon of Fatimid Armenians was part of a historical undercurrent which began much earlier with the spread of Christianity in Greater and Lesser Armenia during the third century. From the fourth century to the fifteenth the factions and the movements which constituted this political-cultural process, generally and misleadingly characterized as religious sects, made political choices and acted independent of, and often contrary to, the Armenian establishment. Common patterns of thought and career throughout their history, attest to their distinctly pro-eastern, i.e., Persian, Syriac and then Muslim, inclinations. Gradually relations with these sides traced their path and they became distinct forces involved in the politics of the region. The reconstruction of this level of history, as the natural background and the context of the Fatimid Armenians, is one of the objectives of this study.

A good part of this work is concerned with the as yet unstudied and rather peculiar manner in which medieval Armenian cultural and political history is related to its Middle Eastern, and particularly to the Islamic milieu. In general, this subject is the least investigated because of a certain structuralism among Armenian historians and the consequent dropping of all seemingly irrelevant phenomena like that of the sects which, according to the above thesis, were indeed the missing links in Muslim-Armenian history.

The realization on my part that Muslim-Armenian interactions were most active through extra-orthodox avenues and factions developed into a vague hypothesis when some years ago I discovered that an obscure manuscript by one of the forerunners of Armenian nominalism, Hovḥan of Erzenka (d. 1293) was in fact a very concise summary of some basic tenets expounded in the tenth century esoteric *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* (*Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*). The large number of transliterated Arabic terms, the primitive composition of the text and the elementary presentation of philosophical concepts justified the

conclusion that this summary entitled *Views from the Writings of Islamic Philosophers* (*I Tajkats Imastasirats Grots Ḳaghyal Banḳ*), was compiled during Hovḥan's student years in mid-1260's. In his earliest known treatises written in 1272 the influence of the *Epistles* was explicit but his comprehension of concepts had developed and his language purified of poorly grasped terms.[1] Hovḥan's two treatises written around 1280 were almost paraphrases of the cosmological-astronomical views of the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*.[2] In an apologetic style, implicitly acknowledging the esoteric nature of his sources, Hovḥan started "On the Heavenly Ornaments" by advising the seeker of knowledge not to shun the sciences of the "foreign races", because "he who pursues knowledge should not concern himself with its racial origins".[3]

Hovḥan made use of other Islamic sources in another work known as "The Constitution of the Brotherhood of Erzenka" in two parts, written during the same year, i.e., 1280. This document, which has reached us almost intact, is the only known text of its kind in medieval Armenian literature.[4] The subject of Brotherhoods came as a surprise to most historians, although it was common knowledge that Ibn Baṭṭūta referred to Armenian youth organizations, similar to the Muslim *Akhīs* in various parts of Asia Minor. Hovḥan made no mention of his Islamic sources this time. Two observations strongly suggest that Hovḥan made direct use of Islamic texts: the absence of any precedent in Armenian culture, and striking similarities to the reformist literature of ʿAbbasid Caliph al-Nāṣir (1180–1225) for the

[1] Seta B. Dadoyan, *Hovḥan of Erzenka: "Views from the Writings of Islamic Philosophers and Philosophical Treatises in the Light of Islamic Sources"* [Hovḥannēs Yerzenkatsi, I Tajkats Imastasirats Grots Ḳaghyal Banḳe yev Imastasirakan Aržaḳe Islamakan Aghburneru Luysin tak], (Beirut, Technopress, 1991); also, "A Thirteenth Century Armenian Summary of the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity", *Al-Abhāth*, XXXX (1992), 3–18.

[2] Hovḥan of Erzenka, "On the Heavenly Ornaments" [Haghags Yěrknayin Zarduts], Matenadaran Ms. 4207, ff. 363b in *The Writings in Verse*, (ed., notes) A. Srabian (Yerevan, Sovetakan Grogh, 1986). The same in the prose version: "Concerning the Heavenly Motions" (Haghags Yerknayin Sharjmanẹn), Matenadaran Ms. #2173, ff. 151a. Both works were first published as: *Concise Book Full of Wise Words*, (Tetrak Ḥamaṛot yev Li Imastnakhoh Banivḳ), (Nor Nakhijevan, 1792).

[3] Hovḥan of Erzenka, "On the Heavenly Ornaments", *The Writings in Verse*, 156.

[4] The question of medieval Armenian brotherhoods was first raised by Levon Khachikian in two articles: "The Brotherhood of Erzenka Organized in 1280" [1280 Ṭvakanin Yerzenkayum Kazmakerpvaẓ Yeghbayruṭyunẹ], *Newsletter [Teghekagir] of the Academy of Sciences of the ASSR*, 12 (1951), 73–84; "The Constitution of the Brotherhood of the City of Erzenka-1280", ["Yerzenka Ḳaghaḳi Yeghbarts Miyuṭyan Kanonadruṭyunẹ-1280"], *Banber Matenadarani*, 6 (1962), 365–377.

Youth or *Futuwwa* organizations of Baghdad, in the preparation of which well-known Ismāʿīlī scholars played an important role.

To compile a summary of the doctrines of the esoteric *Epistles*—often making use of verbal translations—copies of the original texts must have been available to Hovḥan in some form. Erzenka, or Arzinjan, in Lesser Armenia was a cosmopolitan city on the international trade routes and had a large Muslim community. In the broader region of Lesser Armenia the Armenian sectarians were active for centuries, and it is not at all surprising to find heterodox factions and sectarian missionaries like Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* and others there. In addition, it is common knowledge that the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity were adopted by the Ismāʿīlīs as part of their *Ḥaqāʾiq* and esoteric literature.

That Hovḥan's *Constitution* and *The Views* are practically the only known dircct links between medieval Muslim and Armenian intellectual circles suggests the existence of deeper cultural and political interactions which Armenian classical historians seem to have overlooked. Only a century earlier, in Cairo the seventh (or eighth) and last Muslim Armenian vizier, Nuṣayrī Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ, was assassinated in 1163, concluding the Armenian period there. His clan, the Banū Ruzzīk had arrived from Persian Armenia probably by the first quarter of the middle of the twelfth century. A century after Hovḥan's death in 1293, and at the University of Taṭev where his books were used as textbooks, an important part of Aristotelian and nominalist Grigor of Taṭev's (1346–1409) polemical literature was addressed to some Persian speaking sub-Shīʿī sectarians, who in many ways were similar to the Armenian sectarians known since the fourth century (as Grigor indicated too in the treatise).[5] Almost seven hundred years of political and military alliance with the Muslims of the region and constant persecutions by the Armenian and Byzantine establishments had driven these communities to embrace mainly sectarian Islam.

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[5] Grigor of Taṭev, *Book of Questions* [Grigor Taṭevatsi, *Girḳ Ḥartsmants*], (Constantinople, 1729–30). The treatise was published later in: *Islam in Medieval Armenian Literature-A. "Against the Tajiks" by Grigor of Tatev, B. "Selections from Ḳashun"* [Islamẹ Ḥay Matenagruṭyan mēj-A. Surb Grigor Taṭevatsvo "Enddēm Tajkats"; B. I Ḳashunēn Ḳaghaẓu], (ed.) Bishop Babgēn Kulesserian, (Vienna, 1930).—The translation: Frederic Macler, "L'Islam dans la litterature arménienne", *Revue des Études Islamiques*, I (1932), 493–522.

My preliminary discoveries of this and similar data suggested the need for fresh investigation into possible links between the unorthodox Armenian and Muslim factions and the ambiguous background of peculiar episodes, like the Muslim Armenian viziers in Fatimid Egypt. In the clarification of such connections, I assumed in the early stages of this study, lay the criteria for the reconstruction of a clearer image of Muslim-Armenian relations. More importantly, when brought to light these matters would eventually lead to new ways of reading medieval Armenian history in the context of Middle Eastern history.

As I stated earlier, the proposition that the Armenian period in Fatimid Egypt was the last large scale phase in a process was based on the observation that from the early stages of the expansion of Christianity political choices were implied by the new religious trends. Gradually, these choices defined the careers of the dissident factions opposed to the Armenian and Byzantine establishments. The two consecutive divisions of Armenia in 387 and 428 between Persia and Rome on the one hand and then Byzantium on the other, politicized all levels of Armenian culture and social development. Between the fall of the Arshakuni Dynasty in 428 and the establishment of the third dynasty, the Bagratids in 885, the church gained political centrality. Its pro-western line automatically put all others in the position of adversaries or simply heretics, depending on the circumstances.

But from the earliest times ideological differences with the Armenian church were reflections of radically liberal outlooks which were incompatible with those of the church and the social structure. The predominantly Syriac channels of early Armenian Christianity were at the same time factors in the development of the early sects which absorbed the gnostic, monastic and adoptionistic tendencies in a variety of forms. Syncretistic doctrines and lifestyles were natural outgrowths in a region rich with many ancient and new religious and cultural traditions; spiritual zeal and growing militancy provided fertile soil for flourishing sectarian factions.

The earliest known sectarians were the Heretics of Sivas, who are thought to be Mesopotamian monastics from the south. Bishop Eustathius of the Armenian Church in Sivas gave them shelter in his town where they settled for some time. The persecutions by the Church of Caesarea, which controlled the Armenian Church through the chair of the catholicosate, started in 363 and continued to the end of the next decade. These communities moved to the east and spread their doctrines in wider areas of Upper Mesopotamia and

Greater Armenia. In Aghvanḳ in the east (the region extending from the modern Republic of Armenia to the Caspian Sea) the sects were active from Apostolic times.

The doctrines and customs of the Heretics of Sivas present unique value as the most complete expression of what was to become Armenian sectarian thought from the fourth to the fourteenth century (with the exception of Islamic sympathies which developed after the Arab occupation of Armenia by the year 650). Starting from the canons of the Council of Gangra in 378/9, consecutive church councils, testimonies of polemicists, and sophisticated treatises (like those of Grigor of Taṭev written in 1397), we find paraphrases of more or less the same set of tenets and practices. But although doctrines underwent slow and little radical change, the political and social history of the sects grew in complexity and scope. In general, the study of the various names under which they were identified over more than ten centuries has little relevance to the understanding of sectarian thought. The disputes surrounding the ideological differences between the Borborits and the Mẹẓghnēans of the fifth century and later on between the Paulicians and the Ṭonrakians are in turn of very limited significance. However, the names under which the sects were identified in each period and context must be strictly adhered to as they appear in the sources.

Although anti-sectarian measures and polemics started with the establishment of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia in the first years of the fourth century, the official position of the church was formulated only during the sixth century. In the meantime, and up to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the resolutions of the three previous councils were adopted and all the heresiarchs and their followers were anathematized on every occasion. The support the Nestorians found eventually at the Persian court, marked the first major phase in the politicization of the sectarian problem in the region as a whole. Nestorianism was for some time used by Persia as a means of exerting pressure on the Armenians to adopt Nestorian positions in defiance of Byzantium. The Armenian church rejected both Nestorianism and the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon, regarding the latter as an indirect adoption of the former, and hence equally objectionable. But more important than Nestorianism, Persian Zoroastrian doctrines and practices survived through, and were incorporated into the syncretistic structure of Christian faiths. From the beginning, and as late as the fourteenth century, the sects were

systematically accused of "Persian" customs and beliefs, in addition to early Syriac gnostic-iconoclastic tenets and Muslim sympathies. In all cases, the thought as well as the political career of these factions remained consistently anti-western and pro-eastern, first Syriac and then Persian.

Arab occupation of Armenia for over two centuries provided the Paulicians with the political and military support they lacked so far. According to both Byzantine and Armenian sources, their history started after the introduction of the Muslim element in Asia Minor and Armenia in particular. But prior to that time it seems that dissident factions were active. From the last decades of the sixth to the eleventh century, Byzantium applied a policy of forced deportations of Armenian heretical factions to Sicily, Cyprus and the European frontiers of the Empire. The various accounts of the origination of the Paulicians (the sect of the bishop of Antioch Paul of Samosata, the Apostle Paul, Paul the son of a Manichaean woman from Samosata called Kallinke, a Muslim woman, etc.) point to the eastern origins of the sect.

Doctrinally, Syriac iconoclasm constituted the major demarcation line between Armenian orthodoxy and what came to be defined as the sects. The church of Aghvanḳ was from the earliest times inclined to iconoclastic positions and presented a constant cause for concern. In the east, the problem took on broader dimensions because of the proximity of the region to the Zoroastrian and then the Islamic Iranian worlds, as well as exposure to Muslim sects like the Khurramids and the Babakians. Links between the dissidents of Aghvanḳ and those of the west in Mananaghi, Apahuniḳ, Mayyāfāriqīn and other parts of Upper Mesopotamia and Lesser Armenia; were first referred to in the context of the teachings of ninth century Ṭonrakian heresiarch Smbat of Zareḥavan (d. 834) in Ṭonrak, just south of Manazkert.

While Byzantine deportations contributed to the expansion of Paulicians throughout the Empire and some of Europe, Arab occupation of Armenia increased their military prowess and political experience. Through their alliance with the Muslim side, the Paulicians gradually became involved in the Arab-Byzantine wars. Considering the Paulicians the "satellites" of the Arabs, Catholicos Hovḥan of Ōżun (d. 728) summarized their development as a transition from "iconoclasm to fighting the Cross, to hating Christ" (i.e., Islam), then to "atheism" and finally to "devil-worship" (the gnostic Demiurge). It was Hovḥan of Ōżun who first explicitly accused the Paulicians of

studying and teaching the Islamic Scriptures and of following "Persian customs" and religious practices.

The "homeland" of the Paulicians, according to Hovḥan, was the marshes around the tributaries of the Tigris and specifically Mayyā-fāriqīn or *Nerpkert*. The broader geographical region which spread between Mananaghi in the north, Melitene and Sivas in the west, Manazkert and Lake Van in the east and the Tigris in the south, was from the beginning inhabited by Męẓghnēans, Borborits, Paulicians, Ṭonrakians and Sun Worshippers or *Arevordiḳ*. After Hovḥan's polemical treatises, and to the end of the tenth century, the next reference to sectarians known as Ṭonrakians, was an epistle by Grigor of Narek (d. 1003). The text is in turn based on an earlier confessional paper, now lost, by Anania of Narek. Byzantine deportations continued during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries and Paulician communities were moved to Sicily, Italy, Thrace, the Balkans and the shores of the Danube. They spread their teachings wherever they went. The origin of the Bogomils of the Balkans and the Muslim Armenians of Ḥamshēn (just south east of Trepizond), who survive to the present day, go back to these times.

During the early decades of the ninth century the military support of the Arab *amīrs*, on the border regions between the Byzantine and Islamic Empires, enabled the Paulicians to acquire a land of their own around Tephrikė and Arcaous. After two raids, the Paulician "state" fell in 872 to the forces of Emperor Basil I the Macedonian.

The sectarians in the western provinces of Greater Armenia known as the Ṭonrakians were active long before the fall of Tephrike. We find the earliest direct references to them over one and a half century later, in two works of Grigor of Narek (d. 1003) who was himself accused of the heresy. The leader of the Ṭonrakians, heresiarch Smbat of Zareḥavan can be considered a missing link between the dissidents of the west and the east, i.e., the Armenian sectarians and Khurramids and Babakians in Aghvanḳ. Smbat's "Majūsī" (Persian-Zoroastrian) education, as Magistros puts it, his Muslim sympathies and, finally, his execution by the Amīr Abu'l-Ward of Manazkert put him in an especially interesting position in the history of the Middle Eastern sects. The close links between the Paulicians and the Ṭonrakians on the one hand and the Muslim esoteric sects like Ahl-i Ḥaqq, Qizilbashs and Yezīdīs was first suggested by W. Ivanow and Minorsky, and the subject is briefly discussed in Chapter Three of this work.

Ninth century Paulician power was the first large-scale phase in the sectarian-Armenian and Muslim alliance. The state of Philaretus during the latter half of the eleventh century was the second major phase of sectarian political power in Cilicia in alliance with the Muslim forces on the ground. The third and perhaps most important phase was the rise of Armenian vizierial rule in Fatimid Egypt. While the Paulician heresiarchs, who survived as the "Muslim" chieftains and heroes of the tenth century Byzantine epic of *Digenes Akrites*, had mixed Christian-Muslim loyalties, Philaretus the Armenian and the Armenian viziers in Egypt were devout Muslims. With the exception of Ṭalā'iʿ b. Ruzzīk (1154–1161), the career of these Muslim Armenians and that of all the Armenian sectarians had little to do with religious objectives. Seen as religious heresies, their unique cultural-political experience was overlooked and it left no trace in medieval Armenian histories. At any rate, it was only after the 1950's that preliminary studies by contemporary historians were carried out on the history of the sects.

The tenth century in particular saw widespread social unrest and persecutions throughout Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia; even when the uprisings were of a local and restricted nature, the heretical factions were often accused of being involved in leading these movements against the nobility and particularly the church. The eleventh century historian Aristakēs of Lastivert is our main source for two major episodes from the first few years of the eleventh century in Mananaghi, Ḥarḳ, and Hinis (or *Khnus*). In preparation for the occupation of the whole of Armenia, the Greeks gave the Armenian Houses territories in Upper Mesopotamia in exchange for their estates. Grigor Paḥlavuni Magistros, Byzantine appointed Duke of Mesopotamia and Vaspurakan, was charged by Emperor Monomachus with clearing the whole region of all dissident factions. The military operations lasted from 1051 to 1054. The Epistles of Magistros are almost the only available sources for the history of the Ṭonrakians. It is from these letters that we learn the names of heresiarchs, the geographical locations of the communities, brief but very crucial data on their faith and customs, and the measures taken by Magistros himself against the Ṭonrakians.

Earlier, during the tenth century, Byzantine emperors had settled sectarians on some fortresses on the Euphrates and Orontes rivers and Cilicia. The operations of Magistros drove them underground to their original locations and caused an abrupt rise in their number

in Syria, contributing to the beginning of a new phase in Muslim-Armenian history in Syria. Byzantine occupation of the whole of Armenia and the fast growing Seljuk empire caused a great exodus of Armenians to the south and the west.

The sectarian Armenians in southern parts of Upper Mesopotamia and al-Shām maintained the ideal of an independent land and culture and their militancy was an integral part of this project, if one may qualify it as such. In collaboration with the local Muslim forces they created a career for themselves and came to be known under different names, such as Muslim Armenians, Paulician heretics, Armenian Sun Worshippers (*Arevordiḳ*), etc. The chroniclers of the First Crusade refer to such groups. Michael the Syrian in turn mentions a Muslim Armenian clan called the Bene Bogousag who were the "masters" of Siberek and took part in the Seljuk siege of Edessa in 1144. Earlier, in thc story of the siege and the fall of Antioch in 1098, I was able to trace figures known as Muslim Armenians, but who were simply natives of Kashē and Aghūso in the north, which both Aristakēs and Magistros describe as sectarian strongholds.

Between the years 1069 and 1086, and before the arrival of the First Crusade, Cilicia and north Syria saw the rise of the second sectarian state of Philaretus the Armenian, often called a "renegade" who had converted to Islam. While the latter, and generally all non-orthodox Armenians, fought against the Crusaders, the Armenian Church and establishment initially took positions in favour of the Christian Franks. Fatimid vizier Bahrām, a Paḥlavuni prince in disguise and a grandson of Magistros, was involved in battles on the side of the Franks against the "infidels" in Palestine.

Of the first half of the twelfth century two major testimonies, one by Matthew of Edessa and another by Ibn al-Qalānisī, establish the active involvement of Armenian Sun Worshippers or *Shamsiyya al-Arman* in Syria. About the same time, Catholicos Nersēs IV Klayetsi-Shnorḥali (d. 1171) was asked to re-admit Armenian Sun Worshippers or *Arevordiḳs* in Samosata to the Armenian Church. The last part of Chapter Three below on Sectarians in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria deals with the state of Philaretus and Armenian youth organizations; the latter were in many ways similar to the medieval *Futuwwa* organizations in the Islamic world and the *Akhīs* of Asia Minor.

About the same time that Muslim Armenians started their political career around 1074 in Egypt led by Badr al-Jamālī, Catholicos Grigor Martyrophil, the only remaining representative of the Armenian

establishment, arrived there in 1075 with plans of his own. The visit marked the beginning of the involvement of the Armenian establishment in Egypt and the death of Vizier Bahrām was its termination. On another level, the assassination of Nuṣayrī Ruzzīk b. Ṭalā'i' in 1163 ended the so-called Armenian period in Fatimid Egypt. The simultaneous involvement of both Muslim and "orthodox" Armenians in Egypt completely escaped the attention of historians, and had it not been for the tracing of Bahrām's crusade there or the "orthodox" interval, it would have been more difficult to highlight the peculiarities of two distinct styles of Muslim-Armenian interaction.

After a brief note on Armenian communities in pre-Fatimid Egypt, Chapter Four on the involvement of the Armenian establishment, takes up the case of Prince Vaḥram Paḥlavuni, the son and assistant of Grigor Magistros who was elected Catholicos of All Armenians in 1066. His three year visit to Egypt (1075–1078) was followed by additional measures after his return home and through other members of the Paḥlavuni House. As a consequence both of Badr's presence and the establishment of a see by the Armenian Church, the community grew to reach thirty thousand according to many Muslim sources, and one hundred thousand according to some contemporary Armenian historians. Obscure circumstances and phases in the involvement of the Armenian establishment and related issues are themes discussed in Chapter Four. With the exception of a brief reference by Matthew of Edessa to Martyrophil's Egyptian visit, medieval Armenian histories are completely silent about Bahrām's Egyptian career and that of the Muslim Armenians there. The link between Martyrophil and his anonymous nephew's (nicknamed by him Vaḥram or Bahrām) military expedition to Egypt, is established only through a poem by Catholicos Nersēs Shnorḥali (himself a nephew of Bahrām) dedicated to the praise of his family and ancestors.

The vizierate of Bahrām, a rather common case otherwise, has particular importance as a prominent example of the ways in which the surviving members of the Armenian Houses involved themselves in the politics of the region and the Muslim world in particular. After the fall of the Bagratid capital Ani to the Greeks in 1046, the Seljuks entered it in less than two decades later. The Armenian principalities in Upper Mesopotamia gradually dissolved and the state of heretical Philaretus became the only safe haven for the great numbers of Armenians fleeing to the west and south. The fourth Armenian dynasty in Cilicia originated on the territories brought together

and preserved by Muslim Philaretus and his not too orthodox followers. Before appearing in Egypt, Bahrām was in Syria and Palestine during the First Crusade as the leader ("*muqaddam*") of an Armenian force. Armenian sources speak of an army of twenty thousand furnished by Martyrophil and sent to Egypt without specifying the reasons for this crusade. Bahrām's two year term (1135–1137) as vizier of the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ (1131–1149), its bloody aftermath, the mystery of the frescos of the White Monastery, and other issues are discussed in the rest of Chapter Four. An important part of our information about the events following the fall of Bahrām, the only Christian among the seven (or eight) Armenian viziers, constitute the letters of the caliph himself (one in reply to King Roger of Sicily, who mediated in favour of Bahrām, and three addressed to Bahrām after the latter's demise).

Bahrām's short term in office was an "orthodox" interval between the Jamālī House of viziers and the two viziers of the Banū Ruzzīk. The viziers of the first group were the Jamālīs Amīr al-Juyūsh Badr, al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh and Kutayfāt b. al-Afḍal; a third son of al-Afḍal, Sharaf al-Maʿālī b. al-Afḍal, is said to have followed him immediately but was soon deposed. A lesser figure, Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī, concluded this phase by a very short term of nine months. With the exception of Badr and Bahrām, all the Jamālīs and the Banū Ruzzīk died by assassination. Chapter Five, the longest in this study, covers the highlights of the careers of the first four major Muslim Armenian viziers, the sum total of whose terms is exactly fifty years (1074–1121, 1131 and 1132).

The first Fatimid Muslim Armenian was a yet undiscovered figure known as Amīr ʿAzīz al-Dawla, one of the most important Fatimid governors of Aleppo in the administration of the caliph al-Ḥākim. He was initially a *ghulām* of Mangūtakīn, the Fatimid governor of Damascus and was appointed to his post in 1016. Over half a century before Philaretus, the old sectarian dream of an independent land on the border or *akritas* regions between the Byzantine and Islamic worlds, found expression (after Paulician Tephrike) in the Aleppine principality of ʿAzīz al-Dawla. This peculiar Muslim Armenian figure celebrated Christmas; an allegorical poem (*Risālat al-Ṣāhil wa'l-Shāḥij*) was dedicated to him by poet and thinker Abu'l-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī. He was the victim of an assassination plot in 1021 by one of his *ghulāms*, the Armenian Abū or Abu'l-Najm Badr, by the instigation of al-Ḥākim's sister Sitt al-Mulk. This youth was rewarded by the Fatimid

court and took over his master's position for some time. A number of considerations suggest that the obscure background of Badr al-Jamālī in Syria, prior to his entering the service of Jamāl al-Dawla Abū Ḥammār (or ʿAmmār) of Tripoli, are explained if this episode is seen as an account of Badr's youth in Aleppo. According to al-Maqrīzī, in 1030 there were great numbers of Armenian armed groups in Aleppo and they participated in the battles against the Byzantine armies.

In Islamic history Badr al-Jamālī's career started with his first appointment as governor of Damascus in 1063/455. When caliph al-Mustanṣir's distress call reached him in 1073, Badr was the military governor in ʿAkkā. His ten years in Syrian politics were riddled with confrontations with the Seljuk Turks and local militant factions (the *aḥdāth*) opposed to the rule of the "dissident" (*rāfiḍ*) Ismāʿīlī Fatimid Caliphate. During the last years in Palestine, he seems to have concentrated only on keeping the coastal route between Egypt and al-Shām open and accessible.

In Egypt, civil war was continuing for over a decade between various militant groups—the Maghribī Kutāma, the Sudanese, the local tribes, and, the strongest of all, the Turks; the caliphate had reached a state of virtual bankruptcy and the caliph al-Mustanṣir was totally incapacitated. The initial career of *Amīr al-Juyūsh* Badr al-Jamālī was devoted to restoring order, controlling the economic crises, famine, raging epidemics, and above all resurrecting the caliphate. On the Syrian front, keeping the Seljuks out of Egypt and maintaining some of the Fatimid territories in al-Shām were the most he could hope to achieve. Badr's arrival delayed the fall of the caliphate by an entire century and, moreover, drove the Seljuk Turks permanently out of Egypt. Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's rule marked the return of Sunnī rule. By the death of the last Armenian vizier, Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ, Kurdish and Ghuzz factions penetrated with force into Egyptian politics. The particularly powerful position of Badr, as vizier of the Sword and the Pen with delegated (*tafwīḍ*) and executive (*tanfīdh*) powers, became a precedent and was maintained to the end of the caliphate. Badr died in 1094 in his eighties and his son, al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, succeeded him. For almost half a century, these two powerful Armenians were the virtual rulers of Egypt which they sought to turn into a secular state. At their hands the Fatimid Ismāʿīlī imām-caliph lost his centrality but the country regained much of its previous prosperity and peace. The unconditional devotion of Badr to the Fatimids

was an indication of the importance of this "unorthodox" Muslim state as the only remaining substratum for the realization of a sectarian haven. Badr and the Muslim Armenians who arrived with him and later on, had no other alternative in the whole region. But otherwise they had no difficulty integrating themselves in the local Muslim community as well as the Ismāʿīlī Fatimids. Centuries of co-existence and cooperation with the Arabs underlay and facilitated this experience. Furthermore, there may have been prior relations between Armenian sectarians and Ismāʿīlīs. This possibility was suggested to me by the biography of the famous Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 932/3). The latter was said to have visited Armenia and established contacts with Armenian "church fathers" and to have been familiar with Armenian sects.

Ambiguity surrounded al-Mustanṣir's designation decree or official *naṣṣ*, which his eldest son Nizār claimed to possess but could not produce; al-Afḍal raised a younger son of the caliph from his sister married to al-Mustaʿlī (i.e., his nephew and a grandson of Badr) to the throne. The event caused a permanent division in Ismāʿīlīs into Nizārīs and Mustaʿlians. In addition, it introduced Armenian blood into the Fatimid royal family until the death of al-Āmir, al-Mustaʿlī's son, in 1130. The controversy around al-Ṭayyib, the latter's son and heir, who at a very early age was taken away to al-Yaman (or never existed in the first place, according to other sources), caused a further schism among the Mustaʿlians into Ṭayyibīs and Ḥāfiẓīs. The declared Twelver Shīʿism of al-Afḍal's son Kutayfāt and his allegiance to the Expected Imām was based on the ambiguity surrounding the apparent imām. Al-Afḍal himself was known for Sunnī sympathies but in all respects acted as a secular statesman. Fatimid ritual, which was reduced by Badr, continued to recede even more in al-Afḍal's time. On the foreign front he encountered the problem of the Crusaders and after his major defeat in Ascalon in 1099, he took up a defensive policy and launched his military and agrarian reforms.

The circumstances of the return of the only representative of the third generation of Jamālīs, Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad Kutayfāt and his reclaiming of the rightful "throne" of his ancestors, constitutes the fourth section of Chapter Five. The brief reference to Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī is followed by a historical reading of architectural monuments, mainly built by Badr, and some by al-Afḍal. For the first time after the great projects of the caliph al-Muʿizz and his vizier al-Qāʾid Jawhar in *al-Qāhira*, Badr initiated an ambitious program of building

new walls and gates, some mosques and also other commemorative structures. In addition to their political significance as manifestations of regained power and prosperity, architectural peculiarities stand as empirical proof of the introduction and influence of many elements of Armenian architecture into Islamic culture. Thus, the initial observation that the most direct and wide-ranging interactions between Armenian and Islamic cultures were realized through the unorthodox channels, was once more made manifest in a visible manner. New research in the *Mashhad al-Juyūshī* on Muqaṭṭam Hill overlooking Cairo, reveals north Syrian origins, the initial background of Badr.

Anti-Armenian atrocities following the demise of vizier Bahrām, himself involved in anti-Muslim measures when in office, continued to the year 1140. Up to April 1154, the bloody events surrounding the murder of the caliph al-Ẓāfir, no Armenian figures reached the position of the vizierate. Upon pleas by the royal household, a military figure and governor of Ushmunayn known as Ṭalā'iʿ b. Ruzzīk *al-Armanī*, entered Cairo at the head of a private force. After restoring order, and by a decree more elaborate than the one issued by al-Mustanṣir for Badr eighty years earlier, Ṭala'iʿ was proclaimed vizier to five year old caliph al-Fā'iz. Taken in isolation and out of context, the vizierate of Ṭalā'iʿ and his son and successor Ruzzīk is of no particular interest. But two factors reveal that the phenomenon is of exceptional relevance to our theme. The first is the return of the Armenian element, after and despite the negative effects of Bahrām's term. It seems that the factors which contributed to the most peaceful period of Muslim-Armenian co-existence were still active and they allowed the arrival of another Armenian to a position of almost absolute power. There is also another reason why the case of Ṭalā'iʿ and the Ruzzīks is of significance, which I realized only at a later stage in my research. Ṭalā'iʿ was an Armenian Nuṣayrī, not from Egypt, but from an undefined city in regions northeast of Lake Urmia. That Armenian converts to sub-Shīʿī sects lived in the region, was part of my initial observations, but I had not found a clear cut example. The Banū Ruzzīk were the first such case. The sixth and last chapter is devoted to the rule of the Nuṣayrī-Alewī *Banū Ruzzīk.* This clan was contemporary to another Muslim Armenian clan, the Banū Bogousag mentioned by Michael the Syrian. It seems that there may have been similar factions, concerning which no research has yet been done.

The vizierate of Ṭalā'iʿ, better known as al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, was based on a legend that he was delegated by the Prophet ʿAlī himself, but more important than this fictional background, was his own poetry. Ṭalā'iʿ's *Dīwān* in two volumes is lost but scattered poems from various sources have been collected in a volume. Radical Imāmism underlay his political objectives, style, attitude towards the Fatimid caliphate and foreign policy in al-Shām (where the Seljuk Turks were supposed to confront the "infidels"). Differences in the outlooks of Badr and al-Afḍal and this Nuṣayrī Armenian from the north are discussed in Chapter Six. For the understanding of the relatively less studied case of the Banū Ruzzīk, I found the testimonies of two contemporaries and friends most interesting. These are *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, the autobiographical work of poet and public figure al-Amīr Usāma b. Munqidh al-Shayzarī and *al-Nukat al-ʿAṣriyya* of ʿUmāra al-Yamānī. The latter's chronicles are valuable sources for reconstructing the biographies and political vision of Ṭalā'iʿ and his son Ruzzīk, the last two Fatimid Armenian viziers and some of the Banū Ruzzīk. Interesting details came up in the research such as the marriage between a grand-daughter of Ṭalā'iʿ to a grandson of Badr, son of al-Afḍal known as al-Amīr Ṣubḥ al-Mufaḍḍal b. al-Afḍal; another minor detail was the choice of the location near Salamiyya (an Ismāʿīlī stronghold near Ḥama), where one of the Banū Ruzzīk, ʿIzz ed-dīn Ḥusām, fled to after the fall of the Banū Ruzzīk at the end of 1162. The judge and poet ʿUmāra saw the fall of the Fatimids in the fall of the Banū Ruzzīk. The caliph al-ʿĀḍid and the royal family, who conspired with Shāwar for the elimination not only of Ṭalā'iʿ earlier in 1161, but his whole family in 1162, were themselves completely incapacitated by their own allies, until their final fall to the Ghuzz and Kurds of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn in 1171. However, if events had taken a favourable turn for the Fatimids, another partly Armenian caliph, similar to al-Mustaʿlī, would have risen to the throne from the marriage of a daughter of Ṭalā'iʿ to the adolescent caliph al-ʿĀḍid. Ṭalā'iʿ's mosque, or *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣāliḥ*, outside Bāb Zuwayla, originally built to house the head of al-Ḥusayn, is in turn a major architectural piece where Armenian architectural influences are again manifest.

Very little, if anything at all, is known about the whereabouts of the Armenian communities in Egypt between the arrival of Badr and the departure of the last major figure, the anonymous patriarch of Itfih in 1173. The research if and when done, will inevitably contribute

to the clarification of many issues. But, in general, all subsequent studies in the subject of Armenians in the Islamic world, will have to consider new perspectives and criteria which this study seeks to define for the understanding of medieval Muslim-Armenian relations. In this respect, the work could also be viewed as a contribution to a philosophy of medieval Middle Eastern history.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SYRIAC FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARMENIAN CHRISTIANITY AND THE EARLY SECTS

The Heretics of Sivas and the Council of Gangra

Christianity penetrated into Armenia from Mesopotamia through Edessa and Nisibin, and from Cappadocia in the west, through Caesarea, Sivas and Melitene.[1] While the second route carried the western influence at the level of the Armenian establishment, the Mesopotamian channels brought in Syriac Christianity. During the last decades of the third century, Lesser Armenia (*Pokr Hayk*) was a separate province from Cappadocia. Sivas was a center in the northern part and Melitene in the south.[2] The church of Lesser Armenia followed Caesarea,[3] where the founder of the Armenian Church, Grigor the Illuminator (*Lusavorich*, d. 325) was ordained. Before he started his career[4] Syriac Christian missionaries from Edessa had already covered ground during the latter half of the second century.[5]

The fifth century historian Movsēs of Khoren relates that during the first years of the third century, the doctrines of Valentine were preached in Armenia by a "gnostic sectarian called *Bardayzan*" (Bardesanes, b. 154),[6] who came from Edessa and was probably partly Armenian.[7] It was through Syriac channels that the early versions of the Scriptures were first introduced into Armenia; one of these was known as the "Gospel According to the Four" with a commentary

[1] E. Tēr Minassiants, *The Relations of the Armenian Church with the Syriac Churches* [Ḥayots Yekeghetsineri Haraberuṭyunnerẹ Asorvots Yekeghetsineri ḥet], (Ejmiaẓin, 1908), 3.

[2] Levon Khachikian, *From the History of the Social Movements of Lesser Armenia—IVth c.* [Pokr Hayḳi Sotsialakan Sharjumneri Patmuṭyunits], (Yerevan, 1951), 5.

[3] Ibid., 14.

[4] E. Tēr Minassiants, *The Relations*, 11.

[5] Ibid., 4.

[6] Movsēs of Khoren, *History of the Armenians* [Movsēs Khorenatsvo Patmuṭyun Ḥayots], (Venice, 1843), II, 66.

[7] This legend seems to have several sources, E. Tēr Minassiants lists some, see *The Relations*, 7–9.

by St. Ephrem.[8] Some communities in isolated areas of Upper Mesopotamia were still using translations of these early gnostic bibles many centuries after the official version issued in the first quarter of the fifth century. Ṭovma of Arẓrun (9th–10th c.) has an account of a "semi-nomadic" community in the district of Khuṭ (west of Lake Van at the source of Batman Suyu, a tributary of the Tigris, on the borders between Aghźniḳ and Taron) in the region of Mayyāfāriqīn. In an explicit reference to their unorthodox character, Ṭovma says that these "adventurers" spoke an unintelligible language and recited the Psalms in the early translations from Syriac.[9]

Armenia was divided between the Roman and Persian empires in 387 and between the latter and Byzantium in 428. But since the times of Grigor the Illuminator, and through the pro-Hellenic and hereditary chair of the catholicosate, the Armenian Church allied itself with the western side. In opposition, Syriac culture maintained its influence through the Kingdom of Edessa and after its fall to the Romans in 216. Later on, when the city fell to the Persians, Nisibin and its school took over its cultural place and role. As Persian politics changed favorably towards the Nestorians around 460, both cities became centers for Persian-backed Nestorian Christianity. Jacob of Nisibin and Ephrem the Syrian were taken as authorities and had followers in Armenia.[10] In general, however, Syriac Christianity constituted the early faith of the Armenians, and it maintained its influ-

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[8] "The Gospel according to the Four" [Ḛst Chorits Avetaran, or Diatesaron].

[9] For its particular importance, the following is the English translation of the passage by N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians* (The Hague, 1967), 227. The source is the French translation of the history of Ṭovma Arẓruni, *Histoire des Ardzrouni*, (ed., trans) M. Brosset, *Collection des Historiens Armeniens* (St. Petersburg, 1876), I, 1ff. The translation is from the 1852 Constantinople edition of Ṭovma's History [Ṭovma Arẓruni, *Patmuṭyun Tann Arẓrunyats*] II, vii, 106: "Half of them have lost their mother tongue through the remoteness of their homes.... These people who dwell in the mountains which separate Taron from Aghźniḳ are called adventurers and Khuṭ, because of their fantastic and unintelligible language; from this their mountain is called... Khuṭ. They know and constantly repeat the Psalms translated by the ancient Armenian translators. They are Assyrian peasants who came from Adrametek and Sanasar ... therefore, they call themselves Sanasnai".

– The regions of Aghźniḳ and Nisibin were initially part of Greater Armenia. For the borders of this version of Greater Armenia, see Levon Tēr Petrossian, "The Armenians in Medieval Nisibin and Southern Provinces of Greater Armenia" (or Hayk), *Patma Banasirakan Handes*, 3 (1979), 80–92 & 81.

[10] L. Tēr Petrossian, "The Armenians in Medieval Nisibin...", 82. The main source used in the article is: Jean Moris Fiey, *Nisibe Metropole Syriaque Orientale et ses Suffrages des Origines à nos Jours*, "Corpus Scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium" (CSCO) 388, Subs. 54 (Louvain, 1977).

ence throughout the fifth century. Liturgy was initially in Syriac,[11] and many terms in Armenian liturgical vocabulary are indications of this initial and major influence.[12]

The politicization of the eastern and western cultural elements and their perpetual conflict shaped Armenian Christianity over a long period that extended from the middle of the third to the middle of the sixth century.[13] The victory of Grigor the Illuminator in establishing Christianity as the state religion during the first years of the fourth century, marked the priority of the western-Hellenic trend over the eastern-Syriac.[14] In a move that implied a tacit acceptance of the status of the Syrian Church in Armenia, Grigor ordained Daniel the Syrian (*Daniel Asori*) as Bishop of Taron, the see next in importance to that of the Armenian Catholicos.[15] The pro-Hellenic house of Grigor co-existed with the rival house of the Syrian Aghbianus in Manazkert, the capital of Apahunịk, that eventually became a homeland for sectarians. Three names are mentioned from this house: Saḥak, Zaven, and Aspurakēs.[16]

The Armenians inhabited a geographically vast and segmented region saturated by a variety of old and new religious traditions. A little further south, gnosticism developed in an inevitable manner from the encounter of Greek, especially Neoplatonic thought with Zoroastrian religion and Christianity. Adoptionistic and docetistic christologies, iconoclasm, radical dualism of matter and spirit were elements in the formation of many such trends. The inflow of gnostic and monastic communities conditioned the development of Armenian Christianity. Gnostic rejection of dogmas of the church combined with reformist social thought and evolved into a refusal of the social-religious order altogether.

Although fragments of dogma can be traced to individual heresiarchs, it is very difficult to trace clear differences in the doctrines and careers of the early sects in Armenia. Consecutive church councils anathematized the heresies of Artemon, Arius, Valentine, Epiphanes, Marcion, Mani, Bardesanes, the Mẹẓghnēans and the Borborits.

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[11] E. Tēr Minassiants, *The Relations*, 49.
[12] Ibid., 32.
[13] Ibid., 21.
[14] Ibid., 12.
[15] Ibid., 22–23, and 28. The source is P̣avstos Būzand, *History of the Armenians* [Patmuṭyun Ḥayots], (St. Petersburg, 1883), 31–32.
[16] Ibid., 39–41.

After the sixth century, the Paulicians, the Ṭonrakians, the Sun Worshippers and the Muslim Armenians were considered descendants of the former.[17]

Of the early trends, monasticism played an important role in the social and political development of the major Armenian sects. The monastic movements against the authority of the church were in line with the slave revolts which devastated the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Originating in Egypt and Palestine, monastic groups entered Armenia from Nisibin and Cappadocia. The Mesopotamian monastics settled in Kortvaẓ and Ṛeshtuniḳ, south of Lake Van, whereas the groups that entered from the west into Lesser Armenia settled in Ẓovḳ, Aghẑniḳ and western Tigris.[18] The accounts of these communities by the historian Ṗavstos Būzand (5th c.) suffer many inaccuracies, but they confirm the Syriac origin of the social-religious movements of the third and fourth centuries in both Greater and Lesser Armenia. Accused of being a sympathizer of the monastics himself, Būzand described fourth century monasticism as a most sublime form of withdrawal from the world and total devotion to God.[19] The historians Korūn and Movsēs of Khoren in turn referred to the fourth century monastic movements that spread in Armenia and found many followers there. In addition to the ascetic communities, there were revolutionary and anarchistic trends which refused all authority. They lived in mixed and vagrant communities held together by principles of fraternal equality and the commandment of love. A direct relation between the Mesopotamian monastics and the Armenian Borborits was suggested by H. Melḳonian, who believed that the word *borborit* was a distorted transliteration of two Syriac words, *bar-baria*, or "children of the wilderness".[20]

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[17] For a general survey of the medieval sects in Armenia, see E. Tēr Minassian, *From the History of the Origin and Development of the Medieval Sects* [Mijnadaryan Aghandneri Ẓagman yev Zargatsman Patmuṭyunits], (Yerevan, 1968).

[18] H. G. Melḳonian, *From the History of Armenian and Syriac Relations—Third to Fifth centuries* [Ḥay-Asorakan Haraberuṭyunneri Patmuṭyunits—III–V Darer], (Yerevan, 1970), 64–65.

[19] Ṗavstos Būzand, *History of the Armenians* [Ṗavstos Būzandatsvo Patmuṭyun Ḥayots], (Venice, 1914), 340–341.

The passage in literal translation: "For the love of God they departed of the world and inhabited the wilderness; they lived in caves and cracks of the earth; with a single gown and bare footed, similar to beasts of the desert . . . they roamed marooned in the wilderness, fed on grass and roots, tormented and in doubt, in hunger and thirst, all for the love of God".

[20] H. G. Melḳonian, *From the History*, 68.

After the middle of the fourth century persecutions drove the monastics to seek refuge in Lesser Armenia and the province of Sivas (or Sebastea), in particular. Bishop Eustathius of the Armenian Church there gave them shelter in his town around 365. Eustathius was a native of Sivas; he had studied at the School of Alexandria where he was exposed to the teachings of Arius. But it seems that non-orthodox inclinations did not prevent his ordination by Patriarch Basil of Caesarea. His twenty-one stormy years in office (357–378) constituted an important phase in the history of the Armenian Church and the sects in particular.

In his polemical epistles against Basil of Caesarea, Eustathius supported the main tenets of the monastics; they were referred to as the "Followers of Euibbus", and according to L. Khachikian, they were simply the Mesopotamian Messalians.[21] Following the ideals of hermetic monasticism, Bishop Eustathius introduced celibacy into the church and was the first to wrote regulations for the religious orders.[22] As a follower of the heresy of Arius and a supporter of the monastics, Eustathius was opposed to the Church of Caesaria. Patriarch Basil of Caesarea described the church of Sivas "infected by heresy".[23] In a letter addressed to the bishops of Rome (376) he complained of the aggravation caused by the heretics of Sivas which spread in the northern parts of Lesser Armenia.[24]

Patriarch Basil died in 378/9 but the persecutions against the heretics of Sivas, started around 363, continued. The Council of Gangra in Paphlagonia, held shortly afterwards, anathematized the sect of Eustathius or the "Heretics of Sivas".[25] Several versions of the canons of the Council found in the Mashtots Manuscript Library of Armenia (henceforth Matenadaran) were published by L. Khachikian. The twenty-four canons which were issued from the Council, summarized and in many ways anticipated what can be called medieval Armenian sectarian thought. Although, almost all the sections were statements of various matters which these "heretics" were opposed to,

[21] L. Khachikian, *From the History of the Social Movements of Lesser Armenia*, 33–34. Of the same period, and in the context of active opposition to Basil of Caesarea and the Church there, a female heretic known as Simplicia joined in the attacks and is said to have written polemical letters to Basil. See ibid., 30.

[22] Ibid., 21–26.

[23] Ibid., 35.

[24] Ibid., 38.

[25] Ibid., 40. The source: Socrates Scholasticus, *The History of the Church*, [Sokrata Skolastikosi Yekeghetsakan Patmuṭyun], (Vagharshapat, 1879), 206.

a set of positive doctrinal tenets can be derived from them. Similar and often identical tenets were reported about later sects in over a dozen sources from the fifth to the fifteenth century.[26]

A radical rejection of religious and secular authority and criteria of orthodoxy underlay the heresy of Eustathius. The canons pronounced anathema to those women who refused to live and behave in accordance with the norms set for their status and role in the family and society, and who instead followed rules of their own choice. Women accused of heresy were those who left their homes and children, because they despised their husbands, "believing themselves superior" in beauty or riches, or because they simply held different faiths. Considering the length of hair and style of dress norms set by the church, women who cut their hair short and put on men's clothes, and those who devoted themselves to monastic-communal life were in turn anathematized. (Canons 13, 14, 15). Anathema was directed also to men who instead of following their parents, consented to their wives' opinion. The heretics of Sivas, always according to the canons of the council of Gangra, ridiculed communion, fasting, ordination, ecclesiastical hierarchy and the role of the priesthood. All those who congregated outside churches and refused to be taught the liturgy and to receive instruction from ordained priests were anathematized in turn. (Canons 4 to 8). Also anathematized were monasticism, asceticism and celibacy in the name of piety, as socially and theologically

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[26] The following is a chronological list of the major sources on the Armenian sects and their doctrines:

IVth c – The Canons of the Council of Gangra in Paphlagonia (378/380)
Vth c – Eznik of Koghb, *Refutation of the Sects* (442–450)
– The canons of the Council of Sahapivan (448/9)
VIth c – The canons of the Council of Dvin (554–5)
VIIth c – Hovhan of Ozun, "Treatise against Paulicians", "Treatise against Phantasiasts" (720–728)
– Canons of the Council of Dvin (719)
Xth c – Anania of Narek (d. 990), "Confession of Faith" (lost but partially preserved in Narek's letter to the abbot of the order of Kjav)
Khosrov of Anzev (d. 972), "Sermon against the Ṭonrakians" (2)
Grigor of Narek (951–1003), "Letter to the Abbot of the Order of Kjav"
XIth c – Aristakes of Lastivert, History, Chs. 22, 23.
Grigor Pahlavuni-Magistros, "Letter to the Syrian Patriarch" and "Letter to the Ṭulaylans" (around 1055).
XIIth c – Nersēs IV Klayetsi-Shnorhali (1100–1173), *Encyclical Letters*, "Letter to the Bishop of Samosata concerning the Arevordik".
Partial and fragmentary data available in the literature of Matthew of Edessa, Poghos of Taron, Stepannos Asoghik, Ukhtanēs.
XIVth c – Grigor of Taṭev (1346–1409), *Book of Questions*.

objectionable ways of life.[27] In some versions of the canons there are indirect references to iconoclastic tendencies, but similar remarks could be later interpolations, although it is not at all surprising to find elements of early Syriac gnosticism in monastic trends.

In support of his initial thesis that the heresy of Eustathius of Sivas marked the beginning of social-cultural movements in Armenia under the name of sects, Khachikian quotes a medieval text which is the most direct statement about the position and the role of the priest. The following is a literal translation: "Although the priest is equal in nature (or essence) to all people, in rank he stands higher than everyone and is equal to angels. In relation to the common people, his position is similar to the *nā'ib* (deputy) of the monarch. Whoever has a request or a problem, he takes care of it through the mediator; even he who commits evil or causes harm, redeems himself and obtains the king's pardon by bribing the *wazīr*. People constantly commit sins and stand guilty before God. All they have to do is present themselves to the priest and pay a contribution to the church . . . the priest will then perform the proper prayers and mass, and will thus insure the reconciliation of the sinner with God through his mediation. . . ."[28]

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[27] Our source is L. Khachikian's summary of the Canons *in From the History of the Social Movements in Lesser Armenia*, 104–109. The Canons anathematize the following:

Those who consider marriage profane [vasn vor zamusnuṭyun pighẓ ḥamarin]; those who consider eating animal flesh profane [vorḳ zmsakeruṭyun pighẓ ḥamarin]; the slaves who despise their masters [ẓaṛayits vor zdiyaṛs arḥamarḥen]; those who despise married priests [vorḳ khoden zamusnatsyal ḳaḥanays]; those who despise the church and congregate outside it [vorḳ yekeghetsi arhamarhen-vorḳ artaḳo yekeghetsvo joghovẹs aṛnen]; those who do away with the bishop in the sale of fruits [vorḳ aṛants yepiskoposin ẓakhen zptughẹs]; those who do not marry, considering marriage base, and ridicule those who marry [vorḳ chamusnanan garsh ḥamarelov-vor ambardavanen hamusnatselotsẹn vera]; those who ridicule the agape dinners [vor angosnen zagabsẹn]; those women who wear men's clothes and who abandon their children and do not feed them [kanants, vor zaṛants ḥanderẑ zgenun knoch vor haṛnēn yelanitsē-vor zordis ṭoghun yev voch snutsanen]; those who hate their parents [vor ẓnavghsẹn yur atitsē]; women who cut their hair short [kanants vor zḥers ṗoḳren]; those who read the Psalms without the proper costume "aghaboghon" [vorḳ aṛants aghaboghoni saghmosen].

[28] Ibid., 45. The source is Matenadaran Ms. #1109, f. 221a. The text as quoted by L. Khachikian: [Ṭēpet bnuṭyamp ḳahanayn amēn mardo ḥavasar ē, ayl kargiv meẓ ē ḳan zmard yev ḥreshtakats ḥavasar, vorpēs nayib ṭagavorin, yev joghovurdēn um vor khẹndirḳ uni ṭagavorēn, mij̄nordi ẑeṛavkẹn katari, yev ov vor vnasakar lini, tal kashaṛẹs vazirin yev na nora mij̄norduṭyamb ḥashti ṭagavorn ẹnd mahapartin. Aysinḳn mardiḳ hanapaz meghanchen yev patjapart linen Astuẓo, vasn ayn gan aṛ ḳahanayn yev tan jami yev pataragi dram yev ḳahanayn aṛnu yev yur arjanavor aghavṭivḳn-pataragavẹn mij̄nordē yev zAstvaẓ ḥashtetsnē ẹnd meghavorin . . .].

Arabic terms indicate that the text was written at a much later date and that equality of all men before God and refusal of clerical authority remained basic to sectarian thought from the beginning. In addition to priests, saints were also dismissed as mediators. In general, early Christian communalism was characteristic of most sectarians of the earlier periods. In this context it comes as no surprise that the equality of the sexes was one of the declared positions of the dissident societies. In the eyes of the church, however, insistence on social equality was the equivalent of heresy; consequently, all expressions of discontent or refusal of submission were classified as forms of slave-revolts.

To reduce the impact of these dissident doctrines, and to control the "heretical" factions, Patriarch Basil of Caesarea and Catholicos Nersēs of Armenia opened monasteries and homes for the poor, the handicapped and the orphans. But it seems that these measures failed to integrate the newly established monastic orders with the priesthood. Catholicos Saḥak (387–436) issued a special decree against those who discriminated between the church and the monastic orders and sought to plant the seeds of heresy and division for disrupting the unity of the faith.[29]

After the Council of Gangra, the sectarians dispersed. Many crossed the border to Armenia from the west. In one of the legends concerning the origin of the Paulicians (to which I shall refer in detail below), the founder of the sect was said to be a certain "*gund*" (bald) woman named Marē. Avoiding persecution by the "King of the Greeks", she was said to have led her followers to Armenia. Reference to her baldness is very much reminiscent of the female heretics of Sivas who cut their hair short, while the mention of the so-called "Greek King" points to Byzantine persecutions of the heretics in the whole region.

From the middle of the fourth century comes the first case of using dissident social elements for political purposes. Apparently in order to neutralize the growing power of the Armenian *nakharars* (princes, elders, houses) as well as that of the church, King Arshak II (346–

[29] Ibid., 61–62. The source: A. Ghẹldẹjian, *Book of Armenian Canons* [Kanongirḳ Ḥayots], (Tiflis, 1913), 29. The passage: "Ignorantly, they distinguished between those who belonged to the church and those who were in the monasteries and with idiotic words they wished to cause strife and create schisms in the unified creed" [Karẓetsin tgituṭyamb ayl zomn yekeghetsi asel yev ayl zomn vanḳ yev tẹkhmar banivḳ yuryants kametsan kṛivẹs yev ḥerz̄vaẓẹs muẓanel i miabanuṭyan ḥavato].

369) built the city of Arshakavan (about one hundred kilometers southwest of modern Yerevan). According to medieval historians, the city became a haven for criminals, outlaws, fugitive slaves and immoral women. The Armenian Church anathematized the city and the Arshakavan was eventually destroyed by the *nakharars*.[30] Confrontations between the church and the monarchy caused the deposition of Catholicos Nersēs and the appointment of a certain Chunak from the slaves of the royal palace as catholicos by King Arshak II.[31]

The fifth century—the Mẹẓghnēans, the Borborits and the Nestorians

Sectarians were active throughout Armenia during the last quarter of the fourth century and the first half of the next. According to Khachikian, those who settled in Persian Marzupanic Armenia were known as the Mẹẓghnēans, while the groups in Byzantine Armenia were the Borborits.[32] It is almost impossible to distinguish between the ideologies of the two sects; eventually the two terms were used interchangeably and often in derogatory meanings in reference to "heretics" in general.

After the division of Armenia between Persia and Byzantium, deep schisms resulted from attempts to define criteria of orthodoxy and to apply these by force. Following the invention of the Armenian Alphabet (in the first years of the fifth century), the condition of Constantinople for allowing the teaching of Armenian within the territories under its control was the elimination or the expulsion of pro-Persian Syriac factions. The military operations against them extended even to Persian-controlled lands in the east. Greek influence and culture gained ground to the displeasure of the Persians. Persian-appointed catholicoi refused to accept the legitimacy of the pro-Hellenic Armenian catholicos. The Nestorians continued their missionary work, entering Armenia disguised as merchants.[33] To the first major Council of the Armenian Church held in Shahapivan (448/9), this was the political context in which the problem of the Mẹẓghnēans and Borborits was confronted. The Canons of the Council of Shahapivan made no reference to the so-called Borborits, whose persecution

[30] P̣avstos Būzand, *History*, 90–95.
[31] L. Khachikian, *From the History*, 87–92.
[32] Ibid., 71.
[33] H. G. Melḳonian, *From the History*, 44–45.

constituted an important part of the career of Mesrop Mashtots, the inventor of the Armenian Alphabet. Korūn, the biographer of Mesrop, and later historians spoke of them as a distinct sect. The Borborits were obstacles to the attempts of the church to establish a uniform pattern of religious education in the newly invented Alphabet. On another level, Byzantine politics in western Armenia required the eradication of all dissident Syriac factions. The military operations of Mesrop took place between the years 415 and 423. In order to be allowed to teach on Greek-controlled territories, Mesrop Mashtots, a military man before entering the church, executed imperial orders to either convert the sect of "*Borboritons*" or to exterminate them. He covered the province of Goghṭẹn, parts of Aghvanḳ and Gardmanḳ (northeast of Lake Sevan).[34] According to his biographer Korūn, despairing of instructing the "wretched and stubborn race of the *Barbarianos*", he resorted to extremely harsh measures. They were beaten, burnt, smeared with soot, exposed to public insults, imprisoned and extradited.[35] Always according to Korūn, as a consequence of these military operations, the "pagans" who insisted on their "demonic faith" fled like "beasts and evil spirits" seeking refuge in Persian Armenia.[36]

The different forms in which the name of this sect appears in various sources has caused a good deal of ambiguity about its identity. In addition to being called *Borborits*, these sectarians were referred to as *Borboriton, Barbarianos*, or simply barbarian. L. Khachikian argues that these factions in eastern Armenia were originally the gnostic-monastic communities from around Edessa, who spread in the southern regions of Lake Van.[37] On the other hand it has been suggested

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[34] Movsēs of Khoren, *History of the Armenians* (Tiflis, 1913), Book III/57, 336–337. [Movsisi Khorenatsvo Patmuṭyun Ḥayots]. The instruction sent to Saḥak by the Byzantine court: ". . . authority is bestowed upon you to . . . either to persuade (i.e., convert) the sect of the Borborits or to persecute them and expel them of your state". (". . . Isk ard ḥramanav Avgostosi tẹvyal litsi ḳez ishkhanuṭyun . . . aghanduyd borboritonats kam ḥavanetsutsanel kam ḥalaẓel i ḳummē vijakēd").

[35] Korūn, *Life of Mashtots* [Varḳ Mashtotsi], (ed.) M. Abeghian, (Yerevan, 1941), 66, 68.

The passage: [. . . yev vasn jantagorẓ azgin barbarianosats . . . Apa het aynorik žeṙn arkanēr zdẹjpateh yev zkamakor barbarianos aghandẹn ḳẹnnelo. Yev ibrev vochinch gtanēr ḥnarẹs hughghuṭyun aẓelo, aṛyal i gorẓ arkaner zṭẹshvaṛatsutsich gavazanẹn, ẓanraguyn patuhasivḳ i bandẹs, i tanǰanẹs, i gelaranẹs. Isk horjam aghnu yevs pakasyalḳ i perkuṭenē gtaneyin, khortakyalẹs, apa khanẓyalẹs, mẹryalẹs yev gunak gunak khaytaṛakyalẹs yev hashkharhēn korcheyin].

[36] Korūn, *Life of Mashtots*, 40. The passages: [. . . satanayakan divapasht ẹspasavoruṭyun . . . kentanakerp nemanuṭyamb divatsẹn pakhẹstakan linelov, ankaneyin i koghmanẹs Marats].

[37] L. Khachikian, *From the History*, 70.

that the Borborits were simply followers of Nestorius (anathematized by the Council of Ephesus in 431).[38] There is another hypothesis that all those who adhered to Syriac adoptionistic Christianity, or "the first faith of Armenia",[39] were classified as heretics and persecuted on Byzantine orders.

The ban put on Syriac trends did not seriously reduce the influence which Syriac authors enjoyed in Armenia historically. The sectarians that Mesrop was asked to persecute could have been followers of Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mepsuesta, whose works were available in Armenia during the lifetime of Mesrop and Sahak.[40] The Council of Ephesus anathematized Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mepsuesta, Nestorius, Bar Sauma of Nisibin, Severus, Paul of Samosata, Mani, Marcion, Arius and others. But as far as the Armenian Church was concerned, christological and related matters remained unresolved even after the Council. Otherwise, orthodoxy and dogma were vaguely defined in negative statements about what was to be rejected. After Nestorius withdrew to a monastery in Upper Egypt and his books were burnt, his followers insisted that his teachings were in no way different from those of Theodore of Mopsuesta.[41]

The more common name under which the early Armenian sects were known was the *Mẹzghnēans*. Canons 14, 19 and 20 of the Council of Shahapivan (448/9) are usually taken to be the earliest accounts of the sect. In section 144 of the *Book of Heresies* we read the following: "The sect of the Mẹzghnēans originated from the Pythagoreans and flourished . . . in Bisethia.[42] The conduct of its members and their actions are too shameful for us to describe. They are known under names such as *Gungushians, Sẹghẹlians, Aregaknoghs* (Sun Worshipper) and *Banǰarakers* (vegetarian)".[43] Vegetarian habits and sun worship were common among a number of sects and the first two names refer to

[38] E. Tēr Minassian, *From the Origin*, 67–68.

[39] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 223.

[40] See Korūn, *Life of Mashtots*, 86. Also E. Tēr Minassian, "Nestorianism in Armenia" [Nestorakanuṭyunẹ Ḥayastanum], *Grakan-Banasirakan Hetakhuzumner*, Book I, (Yerevan, 1941), 178.

[41] E. Tēr Minassian, "Nestorianism in Armenia", 177.

[42] Or Pisidia, a province in western Asia Minor, between Phrygia in the north and Lycia in the south, near modern Antalia.

[43] L. Khachikian, *From the History of Social Movements*, 78. The source is *Book of Heresies* [Girḳ Ḥerẑvaẓots], (ed.) Miaban, (Vagharshapat, 1892), 19. The passage: [Mẹzgheneatsots aghandẹn i pitagorakanatsẹn busav yev zoratsav yerṭal banaketsan aṛ P̣isedia, yev zor inch gorẓẹn garsheli ē khosel mez. Yev anvanḳ aghandotsẹn anvanen Gungusheanḳ, Sẹghẹleanḳ, Aregaknogh, Banǰarakerḳ].

locations, as sectarians were often identified by their places of origin or habitat. The novelty is their so-called Pythagorean origin. The remark may be related to their fraternal and closed community systems and esoteric doctrines, reminiscent of Pythagorean communities.

The three canons of the Council of Shahapivan (see Appendix I) devoted to the Mẹẓghnēans disclosed very little of the doctrines and the expansion of the sect. It seems that following the deaths of Catholicos Saḥak and Mesrop (in 439 and 440 respectively), the church lost some of its influence and Mẹẓghnēanism spread among all classes of society. The Council warned everyone, including bishops, aristocrats, military men and commoners, against adhering to the sect. Not only followers but also collaborators and all those who provided shelter or concealed information were subject to anathema and punishment. The standard punishments assigned to all heretics were being hamstrung, branded on the forehead with the fox-sign and being confined to leprosariea. Children were sent to rehabilitation centers and some to monasteries.[44]

The first academic and extensive work about sects was written at the time of the Council of Shahapivan by one of the disciples of Mesrop, Eznik of Koghb, the Bishop of Bagrevand. Eznik's *Refutation of the Sects* [Yeghẓ Aghandots] dealt with a wide range of doctrines classified under four groups: the Pagan sects, Persian Zoroastrians, Greek philosophers, and Marcionites. The only information about the Mẹẓghnēans we find in Eznik, is a "similarity" he traces between them on the one hand and the Marcionites and Manichaeans on the other. He points out that they all considered marriage profane and refused to believe in the resurrection of the bodies.[45]

Based on Eznik's *Refutation* and the Canons 19 and 20 of the Council of Sahapivan, we can infer that the Mẹẓghnēans held an adoptionistic christology, insisted oṇ communal life and had religious rituals of their own. Zoroastrian and dualistic doctrines were common to most syncretistic sects, and instead of singling out any particular sect, Eznik examined the philosophical bases of the four "sects", as he put

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[44] The text of the canons from A. Ghẹldẹjian's *Book of Armenian Canons*, 73, 80–82, and their English translation from N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 82–83, see Appendix I.

[45] Eznik of Koghb, *Refutation of the Sects* [Yeznik Koghbatsi, Yeghẓ Aghandots], (Tiflis, 1914), 199, 202. The passages: [Amusnuṭyun tẹvyal hAstuẓo pẹghẓuṭyun ḥamaritsen, vorpēs Markion yev Mani yev Mẹẓgheneayḳ . . . Aylev haruṭyun marmnots chḥavatal, usti itsē Markioni yev Manya yev aylotsẹn vorpisats].

it. The refutation of Zoroastrian dualism had religious motivations as well as purely political considerations in Persian-held Armenia, and for a variety of considerations, many converted to the Zoroastrian religion. The refutation of the teachings of the Greek philosophers, as Eznik put it, aimed at dismissing natural theology, despite its obvious virtues that he acknowledges; he defended the supremacy of revelation as the first premise of Christianity. Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean theologies in turn were briefly yet sympathetically presented, then systematically argued against.[46]

The section which was most relevant to the problem of the sects was the refutation of Marcionism.[47] This section of Eznik's *Refutation* is the first scholarly discussion of adoptionistic and early Christian thought.[48] Whether Eznik's interest in the Marcionites was an indication of the actual presence of pure Marcionites in Armenia, is a question that even if answered is futile. Eznik was addressing a philosophical-theological elite and making a first attempt to find a philosophically sound and theologically "orthodox" position for Armenian Christianity. It seems that before drawing the limits of orthodoxy, which was too premature at the time, Eznik resorted to polemical and apologetic literature as a tool for drawing the broad demarcation lines between Christianity and the other faiths and religious positions. The official position of the Armenian Church was formulated only by the end of the sixth century, otherwise the limits between dogma and heresy remained mobile for a long time. Often, prominent figures like P̣avstos Būzand, Ghazar of P̣arbi, Movsēs of Khoren, Anania of Shirak, Daviṭ Anhaghṭ and others were accused of heresy.

Of the early sects, the Nestorians in particular occupied a special position in Armenia. The Council of Dvin in the middle of the sixth century qualified the Nestorians for the first time as the cause of a "spiritual catastrophe" and accused them of hosting the "outlaws" in

[46] Eznik of Koghb, *Refutation of the Sects*, (Yerevan, 1970), 129–151.

[47] Ibid., 152–181.

[48] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 205. The "inaccuracy" ascribed to Eznik's comprehension of Marcionism, is in my opinion a poor description of the basic concerns of this author. The themes of the four chapters of the book are simply occasions to refute matters of broader scope as far as heretical thought is concerned. Eznik generalizes Marcionite doctrines into largely gnostic-adoptionistic attitudes. At any rate, given the melange of sects in the region, I can see no reason why the sympathizers of this particular gnostic sect should have refrained from preaching in Armenia. Consequently, this chapter is the first clear and academic statement about the active presence of adoptionistic sects in Armenia.

a clear reference to the local Armenian sectarians with whom they shared doctrines and practices.[49] But more than a century earlier, to decide his position towards the doctrines of Nestorius, Catholicos Saḥak wrote to Patriarch Proclus of Constantinople to inquire about their orthodoxy.[50] There is no mention of the Nestorians during the short period following the deaths of Mesrop and Saḥak. They seem to have temporarily withdrawn to Edessa and Nisibin. But shortly thereafter, a major Nestorian figure, Bar Sauma, the metropolitan of Nisibin (435–489) appeared in Armenian history. During the early years of the reign of Emperor Beroz of Persia (457–484) Bar Sauma managed to gain the support of the Persian court and Nestorianism became the official faith of the Persian Church. Armenians in Persian Armenia were urged to follow the faith of Nestorius, in defiance of western rejection of the sect.[51]

Bar Hebraeus, Ṭovma of Arẓrun and Michael the Syrian offer extremely interesting data about Bar Sauma's role in Nisibin and Persia and his efforts to preach Nestorianism in Armenia. According to Bar Hebraeus, Nestorius failed to penetrate into Armenia and upon warnings against entering Armenia, he abandoned the project.[52] Ṭovma of Arẓrun has a different version of these events. According to him, Bar Sauma arrived in the province of Mogḳ (south and southwest of Lake Van) and "sowed the seeds of his heresy there"; upon threats from Mershabuh Arẓruni, he eventually withdrew.[53]

Whatever the outcome of his missionary work in Armenia, Bar Sauma retaliated by accusing the Armenians of siding with Byzantium against Persia. He presented letters from the Armenian Catholicos Ḳristapor sent to the churches of the region as messages to incite them to seek alliance with the Greeks. According to Ṭovma, these allegations caused a great deal of bloodshed.[54] During the term of Catholicos Giut (461–472), three Nestorians were said to have arrived in Armenia from the region of Antioch and *Afshin* (or "*Avlin*") in

[49] For the *Oath of Union*, see Appendix II, N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 236–237.
[50] About this correspondence see the above source, 86–87.
[51] L. M. Meliḳisēt-Bek, *Georgian sources about Armenia and Armenians* [Vratsakan Aghbūrnerẹ Ḥayastani yev Ḥayeri masin], (Yerevan, 1934), 35.
[52] Gregorii Barhebraei, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, (eds.) Abbeloos et Lamy, (Louvain 1872–1877), III, 71.
[53] Ṭovma of Arẓrun, *History*, 81.
[54] Op. cit.

particular. These were Constantine, Petros, and Theodorus. They were accused of preaching that Mary was not God-Bearer (*theotokos*) and that the Cross was not holy. The source of this information is a letter by the Catholicos to Davit̤ Anhaght̤ (a major Aristotelian-neoplatonic philosopher of the early sixth century), asking the latter to write a treatise in defense of orthodoxy.[55]

When Nestorianism became the official doctrine of the Christian church in Persia, the Armenian Church found itself in an extremely difficult position between those who accepted the Council of Chalcedon (451) or Byzantine Orthodoxy, and Nestorians in the east. In his "Epistle to the orthodox Christians of Persia", Catholicos Babgen explained the position of the church in the context of the Canons of the Council of Dvin in 506/7.[56] A delegation from Persia representing the "orthodox" Christians there, arrived in Dvin and met the council of bishops and declared that their community remained close to the Armenian church in its doctrines. On this occasion, the teachings of Mani, Nestorius, Diodorus, Theodore, Paul of Samosata, etc. were denounced and the heresiarchs anathematized.[57]

The sixth century—The position of the Armenian Church

During the first half of the sixth century, the Armenian church acted as the champion of the anti-Chalcedonians and the Monophysites.[58] In 554/5 Nersēs II of Ashtarak (548/9–556/7) summoned bishops, *nakharars* and other figures to examine Nestorian expansion in Armenia. The most important of the three documents issued from the

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[55] E. Tēr Minassian, "Nestorianism in Armenia", 198–199.

[56] See "Epistle to the Armenians from the orthodox (Christians) of Persia" [T̤ught̤ h̤ayots i parsẹs aṛ ughghapaṛẹs], *Book of Letters* [Girḳ Tẹght̤ots], (Tiflis, 1901), 41–46.

[57] The passage in the original text where Nestorian heresiarchs are mentioned and complaints are stated about their mobile councils and persecutions of the "orthodox" Christians: "The leaders of the blasphemous sects met in different locations, sometimes in Gundishabuh, at others in Syria; (they were) Agag, Bar Sauma, Mani and Yuhanna, Paul and Miḳa and other sympathizers who followed Diodurus and Theodore in thought and arrogant conduct. They found ways through kings and judges to cause great perils and harm to the orthodox believers in our land".

[58] E. Tēr Minassian, "Nestorianism in Armenia", 211. During the year 530, Catholicos Ḳristapor took up journeys in the region, and sent epistles to the various centers in Syria and Khuzastan and "other orthodox believers" as well as secular figures.

Council of Dvin was the "Oath of Union".[59] The Council expressed its grave concern about the alarming increase in the number of the Nestorians and their activity around the church of Manajihr Rajik. Regarding the sect as the inheritor of the early adoptionists, the Council repeated the anathema by the councils of Constantinople, Nicaea and Ephesus. It was also explained that the Nestorians had taken refuge in Nisibin and from there moved to Khuzastan and flourished in Persia enjoying the protection of the Persian court. The "evil sect of the Nestorians of Khuzastan" gradually penetrated into Armenia disguised as merchants. The Nestorian community grew so much that it required a church and clergy to head and serve its members. A monastery dedicated to the martyr Manajihr Rajik was built in 547–548. These Nestorians, continues the Oath, persuaded the people that they "shared the same faith" with the Armenians. Furthermore, they provided all the services to them and replaced the national church. This peaceful Nestorian penetration accelerated during the last two decades of the fifth century.[60]

The term Paulician (*Pavghikean*) appeared for the first time in the "Oath of Union". However, the mention of the sect at this stage could be an addition by later scribes, just as we find in another text entitled "Call to Repentance" by Catholicos Hovḥan I Mandakuni (478–490).[61] After over 160 years, in the 720's, Catholicos Hovḥan of Ōzun considered the Paulicians of his time as the "remnants" of the sect that Catholicos Nersēs had to deal with (i.e., the Nestorians and/or their local allies).[62] In the same treatise against the Paulicians, Hovḥan used the term "mẹẓghnēan" to describe the eighth century Paulicians. This direct linkage between the early sectarians and the Paulicians led K. Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian to suggest that the sectarians who settled in and around Manajihr Rajik were mostly local sectarians, or the same Mẹẓghnēan heretics anathematized by the Council of Shahapivan.[63]

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[59] See the text of the "Oath of Union" and its English translation in N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 88–89, 236–238.

[60] E. Tēr Minassian, "Nestorianism in Armenia", 215.

[61] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 87. This is the document where Catholicos Hovḥan Mandakuni decrees a seven year penance on the Paulician sectarians. The issue, which I find superfluous, is whether it is possible to assume the existence of a sect called Paulicians during the fifth century.

[62] Hovḥan of Ōzun, *Writings* [Hovḥannu Imatasiri Avžnetvo Matenagruṭyunḳ], (Venice, 1833), 39.

[63] See Karapet Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian, *History of the Armenian Church—Part I* [Ḥayots Yekeghetsvo Patmuṭyun], (Vagharshapat, 1908).

Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian was one of the first scholars who attempted to find links between the Mẹẓghnēans, the Paulicians and the early adoptionistic trends of the second and the third centuries. According to him, after the expulsion and anathemy of Paul of Samosata the adoptionists fled from Antioch and formed secret communities, some finding refuge in Persian-controlled territories. The "Nestorians of Khuzastan" that the Oath of Union spoke of, were probably these old Syrian adoptionists who mixed with the fifth-century Nestorians.[64]

The introductory paragraph of the "Oath of Union" indeed provides some grounds to support Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian's hypothesis. The Council described the Nestorians as those that the three Universal Councils anathematized, but since there were no Nestorians at the time of the Councils of Constantinople, Nicaea and Ephesus, the Council of Dvin must have considered the Nestorians as the inheritors of the early gnostic-adoptionistic sects. At any rate, the Council of Dvin in 554 was facing a problem much greater than just a community of immigrant Nestorians around Manajihr Rajik.

The sects and their local sympathizers presented a broad pro-eastern front which included prominent members of the aristocracy and the church. A direct indication to this is an additional document Catholicos Nersēs issued after the Council; he reminded those who attended and others who did not of the necessity of abiding by the decisions of the Council. It seems that a number of the participants were brought under pressure and were likely to neglect the decisions after their return home. From the start, several figures excused themselves and received severe notes from the Catholicos.[65] This follow-up document was called "Resolutions of the holy church concerning the Nestorians" and was signed by three other bishops in addition to Nersēs II.[66]

Nestorianism became an aspect of Persian policy towards the Christians and Armenians in particular. Consequently, participation in the Council was practically a defiance of Persian authority.[67] The political dimensions of the problem of Nestorians, the dispute around

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[64] 207–208.

[65] This document is called "Letter of blame addressed to the bishops" [Ṭughṭ meghadruṭyan aṛ yepiskoposunsẹn], *Book of Letters*, 70–71.

[66] "The resolutions [voroshumnẹn] of the holy church concerning the Nestorians", signed by Nersēs II Catholicos, Bishop Mershabuh of Taron and Mamikonians, Bishop Petrus of Siuniḳ, addressed to the Bishops Grigor Mardpetakan and Grigor Arẓruni.

[67] E. Tēr Minassian, "Nestorianism in Armenia", 222.

their influence at the time of the Council of Dvin and the record of mutual insults are all preserved in the *Book of Letters*.

The war against the Nestorians began to die down by the end of the sixth century and during the early decades of the next. It was said that they had been driven to Aghvanḳ and Georgia, and that just as Dvin was their center in Armenia, Tbilisi became their center where they continued to act disguised as merchants.[68] It is hard to believe that Nestorian activity ceased in Armenia after the Council of Dvin. A major achievement of the Council was the definition of the doctrinal position of the Church. The latter, however, found that the christological position of the Council of Chalcedon identified it with the Nestorian heresy.[69]

The Council of Dvin in 506/7 appeared to be inclined to accept Monophysitism as a form of reaction to the Council of Chalcedon, rather than as a separate doctrinal position. Among the first Monophysites to argue against this position were Bishop Julian of Halicarnassus and Bishop Severus of Antioch. When Justinian I (518–527) deposed the Monophysites in 518, they went to Alexandria where the polemics concerning the corruptibility of the body of Christ first emerged. The Julianists, who were also known as Phantasiasts, believed that to save man, Christ willingly took upon himself all the physical peculiarities of humanity (like hunger, thirst, sweat, pain, etc.). The Severians insisted that Christ's body was corruptible similar to those of humans, because in order to save man he had to have a corruptible body himself.[70]

Both these trends were anathematized by the Armenian Church during the last decades of the sixth century and later periods. Tēr Minassiants suggests that although the Armenian Church accepted the christology of Cyril of Alexandria and did not take an active part in the dispute among the Monophysites, it nevertheless followed it closely. According to him, in the early periods of doctrinal formulation, the Armenian church was closer to Julianist Christology, as briefly expounded above,[71] and that its position was made explicit by the middle of the sixth century.[72]

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68 Ibid., 230.
69 E. Tēr Minassiants, *The Relations of the Armenian Church*, 77.
70 Ibid., 84–85.
71 Ibid., 88–89.
72 Ibid., 105.

In the *Book of Letters* there is a document entitled "Epistle of the orthodox Syrians in Armenia", which offers a glimpse of the situation at the time. This text was a letter signed by priests, abbots of monasteries as well as members of the "orthodox" community there. These "orthodox" Syrians defined their location in *Nẹrpkert* (Mayyāfāriqīn), a region in Upper Mesopotamia that from the beginning and for centuries was the homeland of sects. The letter was an urgent plea for help addressed to the Armenian Catholicos Nersēs II of Ashtarak. "As children from their father", these "orthodox" Syrians asked "fatherly assistance" and sought "cure as people in illness". They described their condition among the enemy heretics as "lambs" among "wolves". To assure the Catholicos of their orthodoxy, those who signed the plea, anathematized the heresiarchs Nestorius, Thodore of Mopsuestia, Diodorus of Tarsus, Bar Sauma, Paul of Samosata, Mani, Marcion, Arius, and Severus. Furthermore, they reminded the Armenians that they shared the same faith with them. At the time, to anathematize Severus probably implied being a follower of Julian of Halicarnassus, hence the alleged Julianism of the Armenian Church. It seems that the so-called heretics did not particularly appreciate the proximity of these Syrians and discouraged them from remaining in the area through persecution and violence.[73]

In conclusion to this chapter, a note is in order about a rare treatise in Greek, written in 700 by an anonymous Armenian Chalcedonian author. The text is a summary of the history of the relations between the Armenian and Byzantine churches from the Council of Nicaea in 325 to 700. The political implications of the Chalcedonian and Monophysitic disputes are presented from a Chalcedonian point of view. The text, originally written in Armenian and addressed to Armenians, survived only in the Greek version.[74]

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[73] The letter entitled "Epistle of the Syrian Orthodox in Armenia" [Ṭughṭ Asoryats Ughghapaṛẹs i Ḥays] is in the *Book of Letters*, 52–54. See ibid., 94–95. The passage: [Vorpēs vordiḳ vor khẹndren i ḥarants, nuynpēs yev meḳ khẹndremḳ zkarotoṭyun mer i ẑer ḥayruṭēnē. Yev vorpes ḥivandḳ, vor tsutsanemḳ zmer tsavẹs aṛaǰi serbuṭyan ẑero, ẓanutsanemḳ ẑez, yemḳ meḳ hashkharhi ḥerẑvaẓoghats, yev bnakyal yemḳ i meǰ gaylots yev ḥamaryal yemḳ sotsa ṭẹshnamiḳ, zi ḳarozemḳ zjẹshmarit ḥavatẹs yev kremḳ i sotsane zbazum charcharanẹs, kapanẹs, zharvaẓẹs . . .].

[74] First edition of the manuscript was by Gerard Garritte, *La Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, ed. and commentary. Corpus Scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 132. Subsidia tome 4 (Louvain, 1952). For the Armenian translation see: H. Barṭikian, ed., "Narratio de Rebus Armeniae-An Armenian Chalcedonian Primary Source" [Hunarēn ṭargmanuṭyamb mez ḥasaẓ mi ḥay ḳaghḳedonakan skẹzbnaghbūr]—*Banber Matenadarani*, 6 (1962), 457–470.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PAULICIANS AND THE MUSLIM FACTOR

Origin and the "eastern" roots: Syriac, majūsī, *Islamic*

After the Oath of Union, Armenian sources of the sixth and seventh centuries make almost no references to Paulicians or other sectarians. But it seems that these factions were active and flourishing, causing consternation in Constantinople. Because they were "extremely troublesome in their homeland", about ten thousand Armenians from parts of Lesser Armenia were evacuated by Emperor Maurice in 578 and settled in Cyprus. In 648 another group of Armenians was deported to Sicily by Emperor Constans.[1]

To the middle of the eleventh century, at least ten large scale deportations were recorded of dissident Armenians to the border regions of the Byzantine Empire. Forced evacuations and transplantation of dissident and "heretical" communities constituted part of imperial policy on the eastern borders. Emperor Maurice justified these measures: "The Armenians are a knavish and indocile nation", he wrote to the Persians. "They are found between us and are a source of trouble. I am going to gather mine and send them to Thrace; send yours to the east. If they die there, it will be so many enemies that will die; if, on the contrary, they kill, it will be so many enemies that they will kill. As for us, we shall live in peace, but if they remain in their country, there will not be any quiet for us".[2]

The Arab occupation of Armenia by the year 650 was a turning point; it provided the sectarians with a political support and raised their history to the level of regional politics. Since then the Muslim-Paulician alliance and Byzantine policy of deportations shaped the evolution of the Armenian sects. By a pact signed in 652, the Umayyad Caliphate allowed Armenia internal sovereignty and recognized Theodoros Rẹshtuni as its governor. The agreement was renewed in 661 by the Caliph Muʿāwiya and Grigor Mamikonian became the

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[1] P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, (Lisboa, 1963), 14.
[2] Sebeos, *Histoire d'Heraclius*, (trans.) F. Macler, (Paris, 1904), 30–31.

next governor of Armenia.[3] The situation deteriorated sharply after Muḥammad b. Marwān's brutal invasions in 701 and the uprisings which occurred in reaction to them.[4] Armenian and Byzantine sources put the beginning of Paulician activity at the middle of the seventh century, that is, closely connected with Arab rule in Armenia. Conservative historians (like B. Sargissian) explain the origination of the Paulicians as a result of the arrival of Arab tribes in Armenia following the occupation of the country.[5]

Medieval Arab sources referred to the Paulicians as *Bayālika* and/or *Baylakānī*.[6] In this context, according to V. Nersēssian, the term *Baylakānī* may have been related to the city of Baylakān situated on the flatland known as *Paytakaran*, between the rivers Arax and Kur. This region "stretched to the Caspian Sea and included the Apcheron Peninsula". In the ninth century, after the fall of Tephrike, large numbers of Paulicians fled from Byzantine persecutions and settled in locations under Arab protection.[7] Nersēssian points to the possibility that Arab writers called the city Baylakān, after the arrival of Paulicians there, hence the name Baylakānī. The Bayālika, wrote Mas'ūdī, were "a sect founded by Paul of Samosata, one of the first patriarchs of Antioch", who, he explained, was the initiator of a doctrine that was intermediate between Christianity, Majian (Zoroastrian) religion and dualism (Manichaeism).[8]

In Latin sources the Paulicians are referred to as *Paulikiani, Pauliciani, Publicani, Populicani, Poblicani, Poplicani.* Gradually the western Christian ecclesiastical authorities affixed these names to people convicted

[3] Several Armenian historians have referred to the history of Arab occupation of Armenia. Especially see Ghevond (eighth c.), *History of the House of Ṭorgom* (or Armenians), completed in 790; also see Ghevond, *History*, (trans., ed., notes) A. Tēr Ghevondian, (Yerevan, 1982).

[4] About the history of the eighth and ninth centuries, see V. Nersēssian, *The Ṭondrakian Movement* (London, 1987), Ch. III, 24–36.

[5] Barsegh Sargissian, *A Study of the Manichaean-Paulician-Ṭonrakian Sect and the Epistle of Grigor of Narek* [Usumnasiruṭyun Manikea-Pavghikean Ṭonraketsineru Aghandin yev Grigor Narekatsvo ṭughṭe], (Venice, St. Lazar, 1893), 50.

[6] Mas'ūdī, *Le Livre de l'Avertissement et de la Revision*, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, B. Carra de Vaux, trans. (Paris, 1896), VIII, 151, 163. Qudāma (or Kodama), *Le Livre du Revenu* (Kitāb al-Kharāj), (ed.) J. M. De Goeje, Bibliotheca Georaphorum Arabicorum, V, 254.

[7] V. Nersēssian, *The Ṭondrakian Movement*, 100–101.

[8] Mas'ūdī, *Le Livre de l'Avertissement*, 203. For details on the issue see K. Yuzbashian, "De l'Origine du nom 'Pauliciens'", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, IX (1972), 355–377, 366.

of heresy in Oxford in 1160, in Flanders in 1162, and in Burgundy in 1167. At the third Lateran council held in 1179, the Publicani were condemned and were identified with the Albigenses, the Cathari and the Patarini.[9] Gradually the term was applied in a general manner to all heretics.[10]

In medieval Armenian literature the terms Paulician and Mẹẓghnēan were cited as synonyms. In an unpublished medieval dictionary compiled during the eighth century, we find the following: *Mẹẓghnēa-Paylikean*, and a few pages later, *Paylik-e-an-Mẹẓghni.*[11] Daviṭ son of Alavik used the two terms as synonyms: "The Mẹẓghnēans were Paylikeans", he wrote; "these (sectarians) were branded with the sign of the fox on their foreheads, hamstrung and confined to leprosaria".[12]

Modern Paulician studies started at the end of the last century. In 1893 K. Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian[13] and Father B. Sargissian published studies on the subject.[14] Five years later F. Conybeare published a translation of a late eighteenth century manuscript known as the *Banali Jẹshmartuṭyan* or *Key of Truth* which he described as "*A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia*". The book has since been criticized for editorial and linguistic errors, yet remains the first in its kind. In the Appendix Conybeare included some medieval texts and excerpts relevant to sectarian history. During the 1950's and later on, Soviet Armenian historians were interested in the Armenian sects as social and peasant movements in medieval Armenia.

In medieval Armenian literature their name appeared as: *pavghikean, polikean, pavlikean, poghikean, pollikean*, etc. We find these forms in the "Oath of Union" and the other documents issued from the Council, the Canons of the Council of Aghvanḳ (held between 702 and 705), the *Treatises* of Hovḥan of Ōzun (720's), the *Epistles of Grigor*

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[9] V. Nersēssian, *The Ṭondrakian Movement*, 13.

[10] K. Yuzbashian, "De l'Origine du Nom 'Pauliciens'", 361.

[11] "Dictionary" [Bargirḳ], Matenadaran, Manuscript no. 1495, 53a. The first term, "Mẹẓghnean" is defined as "Paylikean" (fol. 53a), while "Paylikean" is defined as "Mẹẓghni(ean)", (fol. 60b).

[12] K. Kostanian, "David son of Alavik" [Davit Alavka vordi], *Azgagrakan Handes*, Book XIV (Tiflis, 1906). The passage: [Yev Mẹẓghenayḳ yen Paylikeankẹn, ayspisats aghvisadroshmen i jakatẹn, yev zjil votitsẹn ḥanel yev hurkanots tal].

[13] Karapet Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian, *Die Paulikianer im byzantinischen Kaiserreiche und verwandte ketzerische Erscheinungen in Armenien*, (Leipzig, 1893). The article was published in *Ararat*, July (1900), as "The Paulician and Ṭondrakian Sects in the Light of Contemporary Criticism". [Pavghikean yev Ṭonraketsvots aghandnerẹ ardi kẹnnadatuṭyamb]. The same translation is published in Jerusalem, St. Hakob, 1938.

[14] See B. Sargissian, *Study of Manichaean.*

Magistros (1055/6), etc.[15] Based on the name Paul, various hypotheses have been suggested concerning the origination of the Paulicians. As the inheritors of the earlier Syriac Christian trends, the Paulicians considered themselves authentic or "true Christians" (as Peter the Higumen, Peter of Sicily and Grigor Magistros reported them saying); it was their opponents who called them otherwise.[16] The Paulicians were often identified with the Paulianists or the followers of the sect of Paul of Samosata; according to other sources, they were followers of the Apostle Paul. A third view accepted the historicity of the founder of the sect, a certain Paul, the son of a Manichaean woman called Kallinke from Samosata. There is finally the account of the Armenian *Book of Heresies* compiled around the eighth century, to which I shall refer below.

Many sects have been traced to Patriarch Paul of Samosata who was born around 215, ordained in 260, excommunicated in 268, and expelled after the fall of Queen Zanobia of Palmyra in 272 (who was said to be a sympathizer and supporter of the patriarch). His followers were anathematized by every church council from the council of Nicaea onwards. After the Council of Ephesus (431), Armenian church councils invariably included Paul of Samosata in the list of anathematized heresiarchs. The first author who explicitly related the Paulicians to Paul of Samosata was Grigor Magistros in his response to a letter from the Patriarch of the Syrians (in connection with the problem of the Ṭonrakians). The Ṭonrakians of the middle of the eleventh century, he said, were descendants of the Paulicians, who in turn acquired their doctrines from the sect of Paul of Samosata. The reference to Paul of Samosata was a current expression and simply indicated that Syriac adoptionism was considered the origin of most heretical teachings. About eight centuries later, Grigor Magistros reconfirmed this link in his *Epistles*.[17] There is no contradiction in the view that both sects had common origins.[18] In another respect, their connection with the Apostle Paul in turn may have had grounds. However, their opponents refused to relate the sect with the latter and instead they condemned them for "claiming to be the followers

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[15] For the specific details see K. Yuzbashian, "De l'Origine du Nom 'Pauliciens'", 356–357.

[16] Ibid., 355.

[17] *The Epistles of Grigor Magistros* [Grigor Magistrosi Ṭeghṭerẹ], (ed., introd., notes) K. Kostaniants, (Alexandrapol, 1910), 161.

[18] K. Yuzbashian, "De l'Origine du Nom 'Pauliciens'", 367.

of the Apostle Paul" while being "the followers of Paul of Samosata, their heresiarch".[19]

At any rate, the veneration of the Apostle Paul was most probably part of the Paulician tradition. Their version of the Bible included the Gospel of Luke and the Epistles of Paul.[20] Paulician heresiarchs added the name of one of Paul's companions and associates to their own. Their villages were renamed for the locations of Paul's journeys. Article 6 of the Abjuration Formula addressed anathema to those who "reject or distort the four Gospels of our Lord and the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, and instead of God, the creator of all existence, venerate the so-called Demiurge of this lower world". According to the same text, it was a certain Paul, the son of Kallinke, that the Paulicians followed and not the Apostle Paul.[21]

The most common identification of the sect was with the Manichaeans. "The Paulicians who are also Manichaeans", wrote Petrus Higumenus, "were called by a new name: Paulicians instead of Manichaeans from a certain Paul of Samosata, the son of a Manichaean woman named Kallinke who had two sons, this Paul and John. She taught them the Manichaean heresy and sent them as missionaries of their heresy from Samosata to Armeniakon; they, coming to a certain village of Phanaroia, sowed their heresy in it . . . the village changed its name to Episparis, and their followers were called Paulicians".[22]

A historical personality, Paul the son of Kallinke appeared in the beginning of the seventh century and was followed by Constantine-Sylvanus as next heresiarch of the sect in Mananaghi. Based on similarities of doctrines, some scholars (like K. Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian) traced the origin of the sect to the Marcionites. The view certainly brought up the significance of studying the sectarian problem in Armenian history in a single broad perspective, but failed to account for the name Paulician. In any case, research into the origin of the name will present value only if it leads to shedding some light on the history of the sect itself. In this respect, the two descriptions found in the *Book of Heresies* (nos. 153, 154) are of special interest:

Heresy no. 153—"*Ḳaghertakan* means [sect of the] bloodthirsty. A certain king from the land of the Greeks chanced on the profane sect of the Polikeans and was not able to turn them away from their heresy.

[19] E. Tēr Minassian, *From the History of the Medieval*, 117.
[20] Op. cit.
[21] M. Loos, "Origin du Nom des Pauliciens", *Byzantio Slavica*, 18 (1957), 206.
[22] The passage is from N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 112. The source as given: Petrus Higumenus, *Treatise* (in Greek, Gottingen, 1849), I, 60–61.

He pursued them beyond the mountain of *Kovkas*. A bald sorceress named Marē was their leader. She rewarded the evil deeds and punished the good; she taught that women were common [to all] and that the five appointed days—which we call ordinary—were Satanic. She [also] taught that it was good to spill human blood and just to eat and drink it. By demonic inspiration, she had visions upon which she slaughtered children, who, she said, appeared in witches' dreams".

Heresy no. 154—"A woman named Sheṭi of this sect, came from the [side] of the Turks [Muslims] to Armenia. A man named Paul, a student of Saint Ephrem, from the region of Ayrarat abducted this woman, and her sect [Islam] mingled with Christianity. They called the sun Christ and said that He neither died nor resurrected . . ., they fasted on Sunday. Saint Ephrem went to them but unable to curb their heresy, anathematized them and left".[23]

The figure of the female Paulician bald heresiarch Marē establishes a direct link with the Heretics of Sivas, whom the canons of the Council of Gangra anathematized. Sexual communalism was not a novelty but indiscriminate and probably ritualistic bloodshed was. Sun worship, adoptionism, rejection of Christian sacraments were other basic aspects of their faith. Islamic sympathies were suggested through the legend of Muslim Sheṭi and Armenian Paul.

In the middle of the seventh century, encouraged by the presence of Muslim authorities, and said to be in alliance with them, Sargis, the bishop of the Armenians of Edessa, reorganized the iconoclastic factions there. He was a follower and probably a brother of iconoclastic Hovḥan of Mayragom, who was exiled from Dvin to Gardman, northeast of Lake Sevan.[24] In the year 667, the sectarians led by Hovḥan of Mayragom and Sargis were active as Docetists or Phantasiasts.[25] Of these haresiarchs no writings have survived, but polemical literature by Theodoros Ḳeṛṭenavor[26] and his disciple Catholicos Hovḥan of Ozun provide some data about them.[27]

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[23] *Book of Heresies*, 113, Matenadaran Ms. no. 687, see Appendix II. In this connection also see H. Barṭikian, "About the Evaluation of some Sources on the Paulician Movement" [Pavlikean sharjman mi ḳani aghbūrneri gnahatman shurjẹ], *Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the Arm. SSR*, (Izvestia Akademii Nauk Armianskoi SSR), 6 (1957), 85–97.

[24] B. Sargissian, *Study of the Manichaean*, 51.

[25] Ibid., 53.

[26] Theodoros Ḳeṛṭenavor, *Treatise against the Mayragomians* [Astvaẓaban Vardapet Ḳeṛṭenavor, *Jaṛ ẹnddem Mayragometsvo*], (Venice, 1833).

[27] Hovḥan of Ozun, "Against the Paulicians", "Against the Phantasiasts" in the *Writings* ["Norin ẹnddēm Pavghikeants", "Norin ẹnddēm Yerevuṭakanats"].

The Paulicians allied themselves with the iconoclasts of Aghvanḳ and grew in power and influence. The Church of Aghvanḳ was constantly, and from the earliest times, involved in problems of dogma and heresy with the Armenian Church. The letters of Catholicos Hovḥan II Gabeghean (557–574) to the churches of Aghvanḳ and Siuniḳ indicated to the existence of Aghvanian iconoclasts during the seventh century. In this connection an epistle has reached us, attributed to Vẹrṭanēs Ḳerṭogh, who had a short term in office as "*locum tenens*" from 604 to 607, preceding the election of Catholicos Abraham I. Much of this man's career was devoted to regulating relations between the Georgian and the Armenian Churches.[28]

The *History of the Aghvanian world* attributed to Movsēs of Kaghankatuk or Taskhuran (started in the eighth century and completed at the end of the tenth by Mẹkhiṭar Gosh) is a major source about the Church of Aghvanḳ. In this work there is a text attributed to Hovḥan of Mayragom in which he accuses the Greeks as "the source of all evils to whom the origin of every heresy must be attributed".[29] The document also bridges the gap between the Paulicians mentioned in the "Oath of Union" and the sectarians of Aghvanḳ. The canons issued by the Council of the Aghvanians during the term of Catholicos Yeghia (703–717) in turn suggest Paulician expansion in the region. Almost identifying Chalcedonianism with Paulician heresy, the Council warned the people against following the heresies of the Chalcedonians, that of Hovḥan of Mayragom and the Paulicians. The resolutions were signed by patrician and lord of Gartman Prince of Aghvanians Shiroy Apihi and a number of Aghvanian dignitaries.[30]

Sectarian expansion in the eastern part of Armenia was an old problem facing the Armenian church. According to Vẹrṭanes Kerṭogh, some "iconoclasts existed in his time under the leadership of Thaddeus and Isaiah." Hovḥan of Mayragom put the origin of Aghvanian iconoclasts in apostolic times; he related that three monks known as Thad-

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[28] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 87. See Vẹrṭanēs Ḳẹrṭogh, "Traité contre les Iconoclasts", in Sirarbi Der Nersessian, "Une apologie des images du septième siècle", *Byzantion*, XVII (1944–1945), 58–87. See 58–69.

[29] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 91–92.

[30] "Canons and constitution of the council of Aghvanians held at the time of Yeghia, catholicos of Armenians, who was the XXXIst see holder after St. Grigor". The document is preserved in Matenadaran Ms. no. 2966, f. 120 r–v, no. 3062, f. s. 251–252. See H. Barṭikian, "About the Evaluation...", 96. The passage as quoted by Barṭiḳian is: [Ard yes Shiroy Apihi-Patrik Gardmana ter yev Aghvanits ishkhan... ṭē horjam duk žẹrnarkēḳ haghags ḳaghḳedonakan aghanduyn, yev kam Mayragometsuyn, yeṭē vasn Paylikeants, yev ṭe vasn khaṛn amusnuṭyan...].

deus, Hesu and Grigor were such preachers in Armenia and that they were compelled to return to Aghvanḳ where they eventually joined the Armenian Apostolic church.[31] According to the eleventh century historian Aristakēs of Lastivert, Ṭonrakian heresiarch Kunẓik (early eleventh century) learned his heresy from a certain monk who was said to have come from Aghvanḳ.[32] During the ninth century the Persian-Muslim heresiarch Babak and his followers found favourable conditions in Aghvanḳ and joined with the sectarians of Upper Mesopotamia. Persian-Majian influences were often ascribed to the sectarians of Lesser Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia.

Politicization: the Muslim alliance and Byzantine deportations

Two factors contributed to the formation and growth of Paulicianism: the Byzantine deportations which practically spread the Paulician communities throughout the Empire, and the Arab occupation of Armenia which politicized and militarized these factions. As a consequence of both factors, the Paulicians gathered in Melitene, Lesser Armenia, from the upper reaches of the Euphrates to Nerp̣kert or Mayyāfāriqīn in the south; they settled around the marshes and lakes north of the Tigris River. Around the year 717, a pact was signed between the Paulicians and the Arab governor of Armenia,[33] and the Paulicians became the "auxiliaries of the Kingdom of the Ṭayaye", wrote Michael the Syrian, and were eventually involved in the Arab-Byzantine wars.[34]

These developments between the Arab authorities and the opponents of the Armenian establishment may have prompted the visit to Damascus by Catholicos Hovḥan of Ōzun (717–728) within the same period. For the first time, the Paulicians were directly referred to in the Canons issued from the Council of Dvin, summoned in 719 to study the sectarian problem and other matters of the Church. Canon 32 considered the Paulicians the descendants of the ancient Mẹẓghnēans, and the allies of the "oppressors" or the Arabs.[35] In his

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[31] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 133.

[32] Aristakēs of Lastivert, *History* [Aristakēs Lastiverdtsi, *Patmutyun*], (trans., notes) V. Gevorgian, (Yerevan, 1971), 91.

[33] B. Sargissian, *Study of the Manichaean-Paulician*, 54.

[34] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, II, 482. N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 149.

[35] A. Ghẹldẹjian, *Book of Canons*, 148–149.

"Treatise against the Paulicians" Hovḥan explained that the Paulicians "shrewdly" struck an "alliance with the despots . . . finding in them weapons to bring evils upon the Christians". Furthermore, he added, "they studied the false and obscure scriptures (of the Muslims) and taught them to their ignorant followers . . . it comes as no surprise to us to find them sharing similar notions with those whose satellites they are".[36]

Perhaps to isolate the Paulicians, both politically and doctrinally, Hovḥan summoned another council in Manazkert in 726 to reconcile the Syrian and Armenian churches. According to Sargissian, during the term of Catholicos Yeghia I (703–717), the governor Walīd was himself a Paulician sympathizer but changed his attitude because of Hovḥan's persecutions, and probably the support the latter found in Damascus.[37] It must, however, be remembered that the change in the Paulician status was due to the change in Byzantine politics in favour of iconoclasm and not so much to Hovḥan's persecutions.

The role and effectiveness of Hovḥan's measures in the events of the region may be minor, but his treatises against the Paulicians and Phantasiasts are of irreplaceable value. Most of what we know about the Paulicians of the eighth century is based on Hovḥan's polemical works. He considered the sectarian problem as a single and continuous historical-ideological phenomenon. The Paulicians were the "remnants" of the Mẹẓghnēans he wrote; they claim to have "initiated something new", but in fact they are the followers of an "old and worn out" trend.[38] Hovḥan located the traditional homeland of the sectarians in *J̣erka* in *Nẹrpkert*, the lakes and marshes around Mayyāfāriqīn and the Tigris, and *Aghẓnịk* in general.[39] This is the region, incidentally, inhabited by the semi-nomadic Christians of Khuṭ, about whom Ṭovma of Arẓrun spoke.

In the introductory passage of the "Treatise against the Paulicians", Hovḥan defined iconoclasm as the origin of their faith: "Starting from

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[36] Ibid., 34–35. The passage: [Ayl yev khoramankeal gtin charuṭyan yuryants zen yev khoghkhoghich ḳristosirats anẓants, dashnakits linelov bẹṛnakalats . . . yev i hẹmtuṭyun aẓyal notsun ẹstveragir aṛasbelapatum matenitsẹn zhambakatsẹn yuryants khẹmbavoruṭyun . . . voch inch yen zarmank ṭē yev arbanekats norun ẹnṭanastsin ḥamakhohuṭyamb].

[37] B. Sargissian, *Study of the Manichaean*, 57.

[38] Hovḥan of Oẓun, "Against the Paulicians", 39. The passage: [Nakhkin mẹẓghnēyuṭyan payghakenuṭyan khesheranḳ . . . Isk horjam aysmik vorpēs meẓaguni inch yev noro ḥnatseluys yev aghotatselo ḥasanel karẓetsin].

[39] Op. cit.

iconoclasm they moved to fighting the Cross, then to hating Christ, and ended up in atheism and-devil worship".[40] "Hatred of Christ", was a reference to Islam, while "atheism" and "devil worship" refer to the gnostic doctrine of the Demiurge or the evil creator-god. The passage in a way summarizes a view about the development of Armenian sectarian doctrines from basic iconoclasm to a level that lay between and brought together early gnosticism, a loose Manichaean theology, and a liberal and sympathetic disposition toward Islam. Naturally, a good deal of ancient paganism, Persian Mithraism and sun worship was assimilated through the syncretistic nature of sectarian doctrines. Reminding the reader of biblical warnings against false prophets, Hovḥan described the heresiarchs as "Nēṛ"s or Anti-Christs.[41] The word Nēṛ was often used in reference to non-orthodox, heretical figures. Matthew of Edessa called the heretic Philaretus the Armenian (d. 1086) a "Nēṛ".[42]

In connection with the doctrines of the Paulicians, Hovḥan's treatises provide very rare and direct accounts of some basic tenets of the Paulicians of his time. Some of these are special rites of communion and mass, iconoclasm, sun worship, veneration of some animals, "Persian incest", generally a promiscuous communal lifestyle, violent and bloody rituals, and the worship of their heresiarchs.

With a tacit confirmation that considerably great numbers of people followed the Paulician faith, Canon 19 of the Council of Dvin stated: "It is forbidden to take communion indiscriminately from the heretics; it is imperative to avoid and not to communicate and associate with them spiritually or physically" although they "claim to be loyal to the orthodox teachings and traditions".[43] Like many polemical writers who used the same arguments, Hovḥan was particularly concerned with the persistence of iconoclastic Christianity throughout Armenia. In this respect, he found the Paulicians similar to the iconoclasts of

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[40] Ibid., 34. The passage: [I patkeramartuṭēnē i khachamartuṭyun, yev andust hanastvaẓuṭyun yev i divapashtuṭyun].

[41] Op. cit. The reference is to the Gospel of John: "Bazumḳ yen yelyal hashkḥarh neṛinḳ vorov marṭemḳ imanal ṭē hetin jamanak ē".

[42] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle* [Maṭeos Uṛḥayetsi, Jamanakagruṭyun], (Vagharshapat, 1898), 248.

[43] "Canons of Hovḥan the Philosopher [Imastasēr] of Ōzun", *Book of Canons*, 135–149. Canon 29, 147: [Voch ē part amenevin ankhtir linel yev haghorduṭyunẹn aṛnel ẹnd ḥerž̄vaẓoghatsẹs, ayl khorshil notsanē yev voch ḥavasaril ẹnd nosa i ḥogekan yev i marmnakan seghanẹn zi patkaṛestsin pap̣aḳestsin miabanil ẹnd ughghap̣aṛuṭyan avandichẹs].

Aghvanķ.[44] In answer to Paulician accusations of "idolatry" and "worship of material signs" and objects, he drew their attention to the radical difference between the image or the icon and the theological meaning in relation to which it stood as a symbol. Christ and the cross were "symbols of victory" and iconoclasm was as primitive as pagan idolatry, he concluded.[45]

Sun worship as a pagan relic, was perhaps the most general and ambiguous doctrine ascribed to all sectarians. The Paulicians, said Hovḥan, "swear by raising their faces upwards and saying, that which is high above knows".[46] Not only the sun but other forms of pagan worship seem to have survived among the Paulicians. According to Hovḥan, the Paulicians worshipped "mouse-catching animals" thus falling into primitive paganism where dogs, horses and other animals were worshipped.[47]

As early as the times of the Heretics of Sivas in the second half of the fourth century, and since then, promiscuous communal lifestyles were ascribed not only to the Armenian sects but to others in the region as well. "They are inclined to obscenities and other evil deeds; sinful and uninhibited behavior is common among them", said Hovḥan.[48] "Precipitating into the darkest of the dark (sins)", he added, "they fell into Persian mother-corruption" (i.e., incest).[49] In a rare and direct reference to Paulician cult rituals, Hovḥan related that "like pigs they devoured their own offspring"; according to him, the Paulicians ate bread mixed with the blood of sacrificed infants. The election of the heresiarch involved the sacrifice of the first born baby of irregular relations among the members. This infant was thrown from hand to hand until the poor creature died; he/she in whose hands the baby died, was proclaimed the next heresiarch.[50] The worship of heresiarchs for being "inhabited by God" was another accusation Hovḥan addressed to them: "Certain men were seen as

[44] Hovḥan of Ozun, "Against the Paulicians", 39.
[45] Ibid., 34–35.
[46] Ibid., 38.
[47] Ibid., 37. The passage: [Aregakan yergir paganelov, norayumn lẹẓaktsi yerkẹrpaguats, mẹknorsatsẹn linelov pashtonamatuyts, haynotsik mẹghyal ankanin khorkhorat, vorķ zzi yev zshun ẹntretsin yuryants linel astvaẓẹs].
[48] Ibid., 38. The passage: [Tẹghmasērķ yev jantagorẓķ, aṛ mimiyanẹs anpatkaṛatsuytsķ yen pẹghzuṭyan].
[49] Ibid., 37. The passage: [Ẹnd khavar zkhavarayinsn katarelov ẓanakuṭyuns, i parskakan mayrapakanuṭyantsẹn vayr vẹtangyal khẹrin khohers].
[50] Ibid., 38. The passage: [Duynpēs yev zasatsyal zaṛaǰnaẓin knoch zmanukẹn i žerbažẹguṭēnē aṛ iryarẹs charamah aṛnelov, zayn huyr žẹṛs vogespaṛ yeghyal sataki haghandapetakan kargeal patvi meẓaren].

elect and worthy of being inhabited by God and claimed to have authority over men".[51]

After the Council of Dvin in 719 and later on, a change in Byzantine policy in favour of iconoclasm drove the Paulicians to the west.[52] Referring to their exodus to the southwest, Hovḥan says that they returned to their "original homeland" in J̌ẹrka or Nẹṛpkert.[53] Melitene became a Paulician center during the middle of the eighth century and Paulician political history started around these decades. Byzantine sources mention the name of a Genesius (or Gegnesius), son of a certain Paul who fled from persecutions and arrived in the village of Episparis in Pharanoia where he took over the leadership of the sect in 716. The iconoclastic sympathies of Emperor Leo III the Isaurian granted the Paulicians a considerable amount of freedom until the reign of Constantine V Copronymus (741–775). Genesius, also known by his Pauline name Timothy, moved his community to the home province of Constantine-Sylvanus in Mananaghi, where he died of the bubonic plague in 746.[54]

The eighth and ninth centuries in Armenia were times of great devastation. Heavy taxation imposed by the Arab authorities caused waves of uprisings from 748 to 750. Large communities and many Armenian nobles moved to Byzantine territories. As temporary allies of the Greeks, the Paulicians supported the revolts by the Armenian nobility against the Arabs during these years. The military prowess of the Paulicians and their growing numbers on Byzantine territories drove Emperor Constantine V to deport great numbers of Paulicians in the year 747 to Thrace and the Bulgarian frontiers. In 755, during his raids on Melitene, Erzrum and Germanica, Emperor Copronymus again "gathered thousands of Armenians and Monophysitic Syrians" and transplanted them in Thrace.[55] These militant Paulician communities received fresh additions in 778, when Leo IV moved Paulicians from the same areas to Thrace.[56]

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[51] Ibid., 34. The passage: [Entryalḳ i mardkanē yev astvaẓayin bnakuṭyan arjanavor linel gẹtyalḳ, vorḳ i vera yerkri zerknaynotsẹn handisanan katarel vars].

[52] B. Sargissian, *Study of the Manichaean*, 54.

[53] Hovḥan of Ōzun, "Against the Paulicians", 39. The passage: [Nakhkin mẹẓghnēuṭyan payghakenuṭyan khesheranḳ vorḳ khratyalḳ, yev voch imastnatsyalḳ i Nersisē kaṭoghikosē, zkni norunn mahvanēn khusyalḳ chogan ghoghetsin urēḳ ashkharhis mero . . . I ḥegḥeghakan ḥeghẑutsich J̌urtsẹn masẹn ḥasyal nẹma, J̌erka anvanelov].

[54] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 118.

[55] P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 16.

[56] Jordan Inavow, *The Bogomil Books and Legends* [Pokomilian girḳern u hēḳyaṭnerẹ-Ḥatvaẓner], (Sofia, The Bulgarian Academy, 1925). Excerpts published in: G. Mesrop,

Led by their dignitaries, another wave of Armenians, fleeing from heavy taxation by the Arab authorities, moved to the Byzantine side during the years 775 and 778. But the re-establishment of orthodoxy at the Byzantine court put all movement on the eastern borders in an extremely unfavourable light. Suspicious of Paulician penetration, in 782 Constantine VI (780–797) summoned a thousand of the immigrant Armenian dignitaries to Constantinople. He branded their foreheads with the fox-sign and exiled them to various parts of the empire.[57]

Deportations continued in western Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia, while in 782 Armenia completely surrendered to the ʿAbbasids. The History of Ghevond is the most elaborate account of these times in Armenia. In 792 "an unsuccessful revolt" by Armenian soldiers in the Byzantine army, "led to the settlement of a thousand of them in Sicily and other islands".[58] The origin of the Muslim Armenians of Ḥamshēn, or the Ḥamshēnahayḳ, goes back to these events at the end of the eighth century. Refugees from Armenia established themselves in Pontus, a little over a hundred kilometers southeast of Trepizond and they eventually embraced Islam. Today there is still a large community of Muslim Armenians of Ḥamshēn in the Republic of Armenia and other parts of the ex-Soviet Union.[59]

Before the end of the century, in 794, the Emperor Constantine VI settled great numbers of Armenian sectarians in Sicily. According to Y. Ivanow, these Paulicians gradually spread into the Italian mainland "in armed and militant legions" and from there they dispersed into many parts of Europe. These deported Paulician communities may have played a role in the origination of European sects known as Manichaeans, Cathars, Albigenses, Patarenes, Poplicani and others.[60]

Constant conflict and changing alliances during the eighth century granted the Paulicians a high degree of military and political prepared-

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"The Origin of the Ancient Armenian Community in Bulgaria" [Bulkarahay hin gaghuṭin ẓagumẹ], *Haykaran* (Pavlovo-Sofia, 1931), 42–51, 47.

[57] Arshak Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations* [Patmuṭyun ḥay gaghṭakanuṭyan], (Cairo, 1941), 233.

[58] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, (ed.) De Boor, (Leipzig, 1883). Also see P. Charanis, *Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 16.

[59] For the history of the Muslim Armenians of Ḥamshēn see: L. Khachikian, *Pages of the History of the Armenians of Ḥamshēn*, (Yerevan, 1969). L. Petrossian, "Armenians of Ḥamshēn", *The Armenian Encyclopaedia*, Vol. VI, (Yerevan, 1980), 119. A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 233.

[60] Y. Ivanow, "Excerpts" from *Bogomil Books and Legends*, 50.

ness and a land of their own during the ninth century. Some of their heresiarchs of the eighth century were Zacharias son of Timothy, and a foundling named Joseph-Epaphroditus. The latter was followed by Sergius-Tychitus and Baanes (or Vahan) who was "overshadowed by his brilliant competitor", Sergius (or Sargis).[61] "About the middle of the eighth century", writes Gibbon, "Constantine, surnamed Copronymus by the worshippers of images, had made an expedition into Armenia, and found in the cities of Melitene and Theodosopolis (modern Erzrum or Karin), a great number of Paulicians, his kindred heretics. As a favour or punishment, he transplanted them from the banks of the Euphrates to Constantinople and Thrace; and by emigration their doctrine was introduced and diffused in Europe . . . The Paulicians of Thrace resisted the storms of persecution, maintained a secret correspondence with their Armenian brethren and gave aid and comfort to their preachers, who solicited not without success, the infant faith of the Bulgarians".[62]

Tephrike: the akritic *state of the Paulicians in the ninth century*

The persecutions of Michael I, Leo and Theodora in particular to restore the worship of images cost the Paulicians and all iconoclasts in the east of the Empire over a hundred thousand victims.[63] The ruthlessness of Theodora caused the revolt of Carbeas (or Karbeas) "a valiant Paulician, who commanded the guards. In retaliation for the slaying of his father, Carbeas led five thousand of his 'brethren' to the east around 843–844."[64] "A Saracen emir introduced him to the caliph; and the commander of the faithful extended his sceptre to the implacable enemy of the Greeks". In addition to Arcaous, Tephrike between Sivas and Trepizond became a Paulician center, or what we call an *akritic* state.[65] Carbeas became a close ally of the Amīr of Melitene, and the other Arab amīrs on the frontiers with the Greeks, from the Upper Euphrates to Tarsus in general. The

[61] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 118–119.
[62] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (New York, 1932), 887.
[63] Ibid., 885.
[64] N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 126–127.
[65] E. Gibbon, *The Decline*, 885.

"disciples of St. Paul were joined with those of Mohammed", and during the next three decades the two sides of the borders between the empires turned into battlefields for "domestic and foreign" wars.[66] The forces of Carbeas showed definite superiority; "dissolute" Michael I, Theodora's son, was defeated under the walls of Samosata.[67] Chrysocheir, a more violent and fanatical figure, took over the leadership of the sect after the death of Carbeas in 863/4. "In alliance with his faithful Moslems", at the head of "the servants of the Lord", he devastated Nicaea, Nicomedia, Ancyra and Ephesus, the cathedral of which was "turned into a stable of mules and horses".[68]

After two raids, the Emperor Basil I the Macedonian destroyed Tephrike, the capital of the Paulician state in 872. The refugees took new positions further east in the mountainous areas, always maintaining their "perpetual alliance with the enemies of the empire and the Gospel".[69] During the last quarter of the tenth century, as mentioned earlier, Emperor John Tsimisces (969–976), himself an Armenian, created a strong Paulician colony on the southeastern borders of the empire by settling these militant communities in the fortresses on the Euphrates, in ʿAynṭab, Membij and Dalūk.[70] Paulician activity in the region of Antioch and their alliance with the Arabs, alarmed the religious authorities. Upon complaints by the patriarch of Antioch, Tsimisces deported some of them to Philippopolis in Bulgaria.[71]

Anna Comnena referred to the hostile disposition and activity of the deported Paulicians—known as the Bogomils—on the Danube, Thrace and Philippopolis.[72] The Bogomils must have been quite notorious communities. Catholicos Nersēs IV Klayetsi-Shnorḥali or Graceful (1100–1173) drew a close analogy between the Arevordiḳ or the Sun Worshippers of Samosata (another name by which the sects were known) and the Bogomils of the Balkans.[73] In general however, there is a conspicuous silence in medieval Armenian litera-

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[66] Op. cit.
[67] Ibid., 886.
[68] Op. cit.
[69] Ibid., 887.
[70] A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 240.
[71] See E. Gibbon, *The Decline*, 887. N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 130. The source of both is: Zonaras, *Annales*, Tome II, 1, xvii, 209. E. Tachella, "Les Anciens Pauliciens et les Modernes Bulgares Catholiques de la Philippopolitaine", *Le Museon*, XVI (1897), 71.
[72] Anna Comnena, *Alexiade*, xiv, Vol. III, 177–185.
[73] Nersēs Shnorḥali, *Encyclical Letters* [Endḥanrakan ṭughṭḳ], (Jerusalem, 1871).

ture about Paulician history during the ninth century. But the memory of Carbeas, Chrysocheir and life in the border regions of the two empires survived in the tenth century Byzantine epic of *Digenes Akrites*.[74]

The Arab-Byzantine wars which lasted from the end of the seventh to the end of the tenth century, created the Arab epic popularly known as *Delhemma*, otherwise entitled "The Life of Amīra Dhāt al-Himma, mother of champions of Islam, of her son the Amīr 'Abd al-Wahhāb, of the Amīr Abū Muḥammad al-Baṭṭāl, the master of error 'Uqba and of astute Sumadris."[75] So far five manuscripts in verse are available of the epic of Digenes Akirites, as well as a Russian version of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries.[76]

The characters in the epic of *Digenes Akrites*, the geographical locations, and the events contain a good deal of surprisingly accurate historical data. Paulician leaders and well-known characters are described as "Muslims". The heroes and heroines move between Islam and Christianity by easy conversions. The hero, Basil Digenes Akrites, is born of a Muslim mother and Christian father. The wife of Digenes defines her homeland as Mayyāfāriqīn, her father as the Amīr Haplorrabdis. According to Barṭikian, this is Qaysite Amīr Abu'l-Ward, a contemporary of Carbeas and Chrysocheir. He is particularly familiar to medieval Armenian authors for having executed the famous Ṭonrakian heresiarch Smbat of Zareḥavan in 834.[77]

H. Barṭikian has interesting analyses of the locations referred to in the epic, such as Mananaghi, Mayyāfāriqīn, in particular Angilene (or *Angegh Tun*), and the relations they implied to the sectarians whose homeland these places were. He also traces the close connections of the Byzantine epic with the famous Armenian national epic of *Daviṭ of Sassun*. The latter originated during the same periods and in the same regions.[78] These epics share common elements and are distinctly

[74] First published in 1875: *Les Explots de Basile Digenis Akritas: Epopée Byzantine du Dixième Siècle*, (ed.) C. Salthas and E. Legrand (Paris, 1875); *Digenes Akrites*, (ed., trans., notes) John Mavrogordato, (Oxford, 1956).

[75] Marius Canard, "Delhemma: Epopée Arabe des Guèrres Arabo-Byzantines", *Byzantion*, X (1935), 283–300. Same article was published in Marius Canard, *Byzance et les Musulmans du Proche Orient*, (London, 1973).

[76] H. M. Barṭikian, "The Byzantine Epic of 'Digenis Akritas' and its Significance in Armenology" [Būzandakan Digenis Akritas vipergutyunẹ yev nra nshanakuṭyunẹ ḥayagituṭyan ḥamar], *Patma-Banasirakan Handēs*, III (1963), 185–194, 185.

[77] H. M. Barṭikian, "Notes sur l'epopée Byzantine '*Digenis Akritas*'", *Revue des Études Arméniennes, Nouvelle Série*, III (1966), 147–166.

[78] Ibid., 172.

different from other epics in the three cultures (that is, Byzantine, Arab and Armenian). Consequently, the conditions which generated them should be sought in extra-conventional and extra-orthodox levels of social-political life in the regions between the two empires.

These epics indeed reflected *akritic* patterns and ideals of life on the borders between different worlds. This was a manner of existence that simultaneously absorbed conflicts as well as affinities and generated a unique cultural spirit, an ethos that by its origin perhaps, was bound to be "unorthodox" and "heretical" from the perspectives of the "orthodox" establishments on both sides of the borders. The ideals, concepts and folklore in three epics are at the same time syntheses of their national origins and antitheses as far as their strictly national loyalties were concerned. Attempts to nationalize these epics have so far distorted the unique historical and philosophical significance of their content. What distinguishes these epics is the conspicuous absence of national and religious fanaticism so typical of sectarian thought and politics during those periods. The folkloric and epic concepts and images in turn reflect primarily and perhaps exclusively a sectarian culture in an *akritic* or marcher homeland.

The first translators of the epic of *Digenes Akrites*, Salthas and Legrand remark that "all the identifiable figures in the poem are connected by family and by locality to a Paulician milieu".[79] This peculiarity of the epic and other comments by J. Mavrogordato are equally relevant to the other two epics. I share his criticism of all attempts to politicize the epic in favour of Greek nationalism. "It is difficult to see", says Mavrogordato, "how anybody capable of reading the poem from beginning to end, could be expected to swallow this, seeing that the hero is *ex hypothesi* a happy fusion of Christian and Mohammedan blood. There is little religious fanaticism in the poem, and only the most perfunctory expressions of Christianity. There is in fact little sign of any real religious feeling at all."[80] In all three we find no "theological passion", as Mavrogordato puts it.[81] Conversions back and forth between Islam and Christianity take place in a folkloric fashion and without scruples. Neither Byzantine nor Armenian orthodoxy are issues with which the poem concerns itself. The term Paulician never appears in the epic, although the hero is the grand-

[79] J. Mavrogordato, Introduction to *Digenes Akrites*, lxv.
[80] Ibid., lxv.
[81] Ibid., lxvi.

son of "Chrysocherpes" (or Chrysocheir) the famous and last Paulician heresiarch of the ninth century. Instead, there is a passion for horses, wealth, hunting, love, war, as natural contexts for a heroic life, and a peculiar longing for independence.

Mavrogordato also points to dangers in attempts to read Armenian nationalism into the epic. It is true that "everybody mentioned in the poem was more or less an Armenian",[82] rather Paulician-Armenian, but, according to him, during the ninth and tenth centuries, there had already developed something called "Byzantine nationality". Thus attempts by N. Adonts[83] to draw parallels between *Digenes Akrites* and *Davit̩ of Sassun*—as two versions of the same epic entity—shed no light on the essential problems these epics suggest for further research.

One of the objectives of this study was to bring out the typically "sectarian" manner in which "nationalism" and "orthodoxy" were conceived and balanced on the popular level during and after the ninth century in the Muslim world. The unscrupulous fashion in which nationalities and religions are treated in the epic of *Digenes Akrites* is an indication of this effect. The heroes do not belong to any establishment, their style of life in a particular geographic-military position turns into a vehicle for heroic ideals. The absence of conscious nationalism, religious and political "urgency"[84] give the epic a floating nature, linked as it were by an umbilical cord to its sectarian identity. Mavrogordato believes that the initial poem, the *Digeneid*, was the work of a learned monk or scribe from the district of Comagene (around Marash in Cilicia, north of Syria). This author may have wanted to "make out of a floating folkstory something permanent like '*l'art des musées*', . . . We know that it was written when there had been for some time a 'Roman peace' on the frontiers of the Empire and when there was a possibility and a prospect of that peace being maintained. The author is telling a story of the past and not recording contemporary events. He has heard of Paulician rebellions but knows little about them, in spite of the fact that he appears to be writing in their own country on the Euphrates".[85]

[82] Ibid., lxviii.
[83] N. Adonts, "Les Fonds Historiques de l'Epopée Byzantine Digenes Akritas", *Byzantion Zeitschrift*, XXIX (1930), 198–227.
[84] J. Mavrogordato, Introduction to *Digenes Akrites*, lxxix.
[85] Op. cit.

CHAPTER THREE

ARMENIAN SECTARIANS IN UPPER MESOPOTAMIA AND SYRIA FROM THE NINTH TO ELEVENTH CENTURIES

The Ṭonrakians and Grigor Magistros

Decades before the fall of Tephrike in 872 and the exodus of Paulicians to the east and south, other sectarian factions were active there and involved in social uprisings. In Aghvanḳ and Siuniḳ the Khurramids and Babakians were already cause for concern both for the Armenian and the Islamic establishments. During the term of Catholicos Hovḥannēs of Ovayek (833–855) most parts of Upper Mesopotamia and the province of Apahuniḳ in particular saw wide-spread unrest. These dissidents were identified as Ṭonrakians (after the small town of Ṭonrak or Ṭondrak or Ṭondurak) just south of Manazkert in the province of Apahuniḳ. Their heresiarch was Smbat, a native of Zareḥavan who had established himself in Ṭonrak, within Muslim controlled territory.[1]

The earliest account of heresiarch Smbat of Zareḥavan and his followers is an "Epistle to the Abbot of the Monastery of Kjav" by Grigor of Narek (951–1003).[2] The Monastery of Narek was situated south of Lake Van in the province of Mogḳ. Narek briefly refers to the subject in his *Book of Lamentation* [Matyan voghberguṭyan].[3] He

[1] See Ashot Hovḥannisian, "Smbat of Zareḥavan: His Times and Contemporaries" [Sempat Zareḥavantsi, nra jamanakn u jamanakakitsnerẹ], *Banber Matenadarani*, 3 (1956), 7–30.

[2] Grigor of Narek, "Epistle of the Most Blessed Vardapet Grigor of Narek to the Magnificent and Great Order of Kjav, Concerning the Beliefs of the Cursed Ṭonrakians" [Ṭughṭ amenashnorh vardapetin Grigori Narekatsvo zor gryats i ḥoyakap hakanavor ukhtẹn Kjava, vasn karẓyatsẹn aniẓelo Ṭonrakyants], *Book of Letters*, xcii, 498–502.

– An English translation, by F. C. Conybeare, *The Key of Truth. A Manual of the Paulician Church in Armenia* (Oxford, 1898). Appendix i, 125–130.

– A modern west-Armenian translation in: Arsēn A. Gueorguizian, *The Movement of the Paulician-Ṭondrakians in the Armenian Apostolic Church—From the Seventh to the Twelfth Centuries* [Pavghikean-Ṭondraketsineru sharjumẹ ḥayastanyats aṛaḳelakan yekeghetsvo mēǰ], (Beirut, 1970), 90–94.

[3] Grigor of Narek, *Book of Lamentation* [Matyan voghberguṭyan], (Venice, 1926).

himself, his father Khosrov of Anžev, and his uncle Anania of Narek, (d. 990) were all suspected of the Ṭonrakian heresy. Persecutions of all sorts of dissidents took massive dimensions during the tenth century. Expressions of dissatisfaction or reformist attitudes became targets for the establishment and the Church. Members of different classes were accused of the Ṭonrakian heresy. The first polemical treatise was "Confession of Faith" by Anania of Narek who wrote it upon the instruction of Catholicos Anania of Mogḳ (943–965). This epistle, now lost, contained a detailed exposé of Ṭonrakian doctrines and their refutation. In the course of time, it became a reference for all subsequent literature on the subject. Grigor's epistle was based on Anania's treatise and summarized the main tenets of the Ṭonrakians, as expounded there.[4]

According to Narek, the Ṭonrakian heresy had many followers both among the populace and the clergy.[5] Some monastic orders, like that of Kjav, followed the "heretical" line after a certain "scholar" named Mushegh arrived there. According to Narek's summary, Ṭonrakians rejected ordination and the hierarchy of the Church. Smbat of Zareḥavan considered the Eucharist an ordinary meal and the baptismal water simply bath water. For him the "blessed day of the Lord" was just a day of the week; Smbat also ridiculed genuflexion in prayer and the baptismal fount. Grigor also accused the Ṭonrakians of "indiscriminate Mẹẓghnēan relations" and promiscuity while, he said, "Christ prevented even the eye from looking". Furthermore, according to him, they considered the Cross a material and man-made object, and the sacrament of marriage superfluous since mutual sympathy and the commandment of love were sufficient to bring two people into a union. Religious traditions like offerings of animals to the church and similar obligations were seen as briberies.

As it was in the case of all previous sects, radical adoptionism constituted the core of Ṭonrakian doctrines. Christ was considered an ordinary mortal; their "anthropolatrous apostasy", said Narek, "led them to call their heresiarchs Christs, reminding us of Christ's warning against the false prophets".[6] Smbat's followers, "dared to call

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[4] A medieval manuscript under the same title, i.e., "Confession of Faith" [Gir khostovanuṭyan] was published in *Ararat*, III (1892) by Miaban (Galust Tēr Mẹkẹrtchian), but is at present considered unauthentic.

[5] Grigor of Narek, "Letter to the Abbot of Kjav", *Book of Letters*, 498–502, 500. The phrase: [bazmaḥerẑvaẓ joghovuyn dasẹs].

[6] See Appendix III for the passage in Narek's letter.

the leader of their detestable sect, Christ".[7] According to Poghos of Taron, Ṭonrakians believed that "Christ was a mere man", consequently, anyone and especially their heresiarchs, could be chosen to be in Christ's position.[8] Describing Ṭonrakian worship of heresiarchs as a form of "man-worship", Narek saw it as inferior to and worse than pagan idolatry.[9]

Smbat's execution by the ruler of Apahuniḳ, Amīr Abu'l-Ward (in medieval Armenian texts written as *Abelbard* or *Abelvard*) has intrigued historians. If Smbat's teachings were "close" and "akin" to the faith of Abu'l-Ward, as Narek said in the same letter, why would Abu'l-Ward suddenly change his attitude towards an ally?[10] For a Muslim who did not recognize the divinity of Christ anyway, Smbat's claims could not be cause for concern and execution. Before executing him, according to Narek, Abu'l-Ward told Smbat that just as Christ resurrected, he too could do the same if his claim was true.[11] The reasons for the position of this Qaysite Amīr towards Smbat were purely political. Abu'l-Ward was a vassal prince subject to Ashot Bagratuni, "Prince of Princes" and one of the earliest founders of the Bagratuni Dynasty (885–1045). The elimination of a powerful heresiarch and an enemy to the Armenian establishment, was a service he was rendering to the Bagratunis. Smbat was also particularly dangerous for his connections with the sectarians in Aghvanḳ. During the same decades when the Paulicians were lords of an independent land in Mananaghi and Ṭulayl under the leadership of Sergius, east of these regions, Smbat was busy organizing the sectarians. Magistros says that he "gathered the poisonous mischievers in one location and the latter consented to follow the orders of this theoclastic, lewd, lawless and devil-loving Smbat".[12]

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[7] G. of Narek, "Letter to the Abbot of the Order of Kjav", A. Gueorguizian, "*The Movement of the Paulician*...", 96. The passage: [... zgẹlkhavor aghandin yuryants garshuṭyann handẹgnyal Ḳristos anvanen].

[8] Poghos of Taron, Matenadaran Ms. no. 5787, f. 294b. Also see partial translation in F. Conybeare, *Key of Truth*, Appendix viii. The passage: [Asen te lok mard ēr Ḳristos].

[9] "*Book of Letters*", 499. The passage: [mardapasht uratsuṭyun, vor garsheli ē yev aniẓyal ḳan zkṛapashtuṭyun].

[10] Ibid., 500. The passage: [... merž ēr yev dratsnoghatsẹn molegnuṭyan].

[11] See A. Hovḥannissian, "Smbat of Zareḥavan...", 15.

[12] The passage is from the letter of Grigor Magistros to the Syrian Patriarch entitled: "Response to the letter of the Catholicos of the Syrians, as Duke of Vaspurakan and Taron, concerning the activities of the Manichaeans from the Greek world, and the remnants of the Ṭonrakians there. These (sectarians) went to the

Peasant uprisings in Aghvanḳ were often led by militant heresiarchs. Earlier, the Khurramids of the eighth century led by Abū Muslim had their Armenian sympathizers. After the death of Javitan Ibn Sahl—their *Mahdī*, Babak (or *Baban* in Armenian texts), led the sect claiming to be the reincarnation of the latter. At some periods, he found Armenian allies, among the local Armenian princes, like Sahl b. Smbat and Vassak prince of Siuniḳ, whose provinces he joined to his territories. During the tenth century, there were still Babakian communities in Armenia, in addition to several regions of Iraq, Persia and the western shores of the Caspian Sea.[13] Babak was eventually captured by Aghvanian Prince Sahl b. Smbat (or Isahak Smbatian, term started in 821), in retaliation for Babak's raping members of Smbat's family. Babak was executed by Afshin in 837/838.[14]

Like Babak, Smbat claimed to be a *mahdī* or paraclete. According to Peter of Sicily, Paulician heresiarch Sergius, a contemporary of Smbat and Babak, asked his followers to worship him as paraclete.[15] Judging from the reports of the medieval polemicists, Smbat stood very close to these Persian trends. The link between Smbat and Persian pagan religions was made by Magistros in his letter to the Patriarch of the Syrians. Smbat acquired his heresy, he said, from a "Persian physician-astrologer-priest", or a "*mejusik*" (*majūsī* or Zoroastrian).[16] Eleventh century historian Aristakēs of Lastivert ascribed a

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Catholicos of the Syrians in Amid, and tried to persuade him (in favour of their doctrines). Inquiring about the matter, the latter wrote a letter to Grigor Magistros Arshakuni, and this is the reply". *The Epistles of Grigor Magistros*, (Alexandrapol, 1910), 148–164. [Pataskhani asorvots i jamanaki horjam ēr duḳs i Vaspurakan yev i Taron, zkni baṛnaluyn zmaniḳetsisẹn hashkharhẹn Hunats, yev i Ṭondrekats menatsyalsẹn notsa korẓanyal azgẹn. Chokan kaṭughikosẹn asorvots i ḳaghaḳn Amid, zi teṛevs khabēuṭyamb ḥavanetsutsanen zna, zor na gryal ṭughṭ i Grigor Magistrosẹn hArshakunin. Yev ays ē pataskhan nmin].

– The passage, ibid., 160: [Ztuynẹs charuṭyan i mi vayr joghovyal ḥerẑvaẓẹs, ḥavanetsan aynẹm astvaẓamart yev tsankapataṛ divamoli anorinin Smbata orenẹs dnel].

[13] The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. V (Leiden, 1986), 65.

[14] For the history of Sahl b. Smbat and Babak see: H. Ḳurdian, "Babak and Sahl Ibn Smbat—A Page from Ninth Century History", in three parts [Babak yev Sahel ibn Smbat-Eǰ mẹ mer innerord daru patmuṭenēn], *Bazmavēp*, 1–2, 3–5, 6–7 (1958), 9–22, 72–82, 132–139.

[15] Petrus Sicilus, *Historia utilis et refutatio atque eversio haereseos Manichaeorum qui et Pauliciani dicuntur, Bulgariae archiepiscopo nuncupata*, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeco-Latina, ed. J. B. Migne (Paris, 1855), CIV, 1239/40–1303/4.

[16] G. Magistros, "Letter to the Syrian Catholicos", *Epistles*, 153. The passage: [Usyal zchar moluṭyun humemē parskakan bjishkē yev hastghabashkhē mogē, zor Mrǰusik kochēḳ].

similar doctrinal background to another Ṭonrakian heresiarch called Kunẓik in the province of Mananaghi. The latter claimed that he was the disciple of certain monk who "spread news that he was from Aghvanḳ".[17]

In his *History of the Caucasian Aghvanians* Movsēs of Kaghankatuk traced close links between sectarian unrest and peasant uprisings in Aghvanḳ; he also spoke of alliances between these dissident Armenians, the Khurramids, Babakians and other Persian-Shīʿī subsects.[18] The followers of Babak were persecuted by the ʿAbbasids, and since the Bagratunis were in the process of establishing their kingdom with an understanding with the ʿAbbasids, the removal of a leading heresiarch was particularly appreciated by both sides. Smbat of Zareḥavan died around the year 835 shortly before the execution of Babak in 837/8 in the east. Babak was on his way to the west when he fell captive to Sahl b. Smbat, once his ally.

To my knowledge, the existence of common doctrines and history between the Armenian and Muslim sects was first suggested by W. Ivanow. In the texts of Ahl-i Ḥaqq or the Truth-Worshippers of Kurdistan (twelfth century), he considered Paulicianism as one of the elements which constituted their doctrines. He traced "strong and comparatively recent traces of Christian beliefs, which may perhaps be recognized as akin to the Paulician or Thontraki sectarianism in Upper Mesopotamia and Armenia in the medieval period".[19] Based on similarities between Ahl-i Ḥaqq and Paulician/Ṭonrakian beliefs,[20] he suggested that Christian and other non-Muslim elements in the faith of this ʿAlid sect were primarily Paulician. In his Introduction there is a very interesting remark about Sultan Saḥak, one of the five Incarnations of ʿAlī, the "real founder of the sect",[21] Bahus and Benyamin, the two other figures in Ahl-i Ḥaqq theology. "It is noteworthy", said Ivanow, "that 'Sahak' can only be an Armenian form

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[17] Aristakēs of Lastivert [Aristakēs Lastivertsi, *Patmutyun*, History, (trans., ed., notes)] V. D. Gevorgian, (Yerevan, 1971), 91. The passage: [Sa sovorel ēr shnabaro mi abeghayits voṛe ir masin taraẓel ēr ṭē Aghvankits ē].

[18] Movsēs of Kaghankatuk (or Daskhuran), *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, (trans., ed.) C. F. J. Dowsett, (London, 1961). See also a modern east-Armenian edition by the translation of and notes by Varag Aṛakelian (Yerevan, 1969). [Movsēs Kaghankatvatsi, patmuṭyun aghvanits ashkharhi].

[19] W. Ivanow, *The Truth-Worshippers of Kurdistan and Ahl-i Ḥaqq Texts*, (Leiden, 1953), 32.

[20] Ibid., 48–57.

[21] Ibid., 12.

of the Islamic name Ishaq or Isaac. Similarly Bahus is obviously the Armenian name Boghos, Paul. Benyamin is also an Armenian form of Benjamin, and we may add Nuy, i.e., Nuh, Noah, also of the same origin. Thus we apparently have to deal here with comparatively fresh traces of an Armenian, perhaps Thonraki, or generally Paulician phase in the evolution of the tribal milieu in which the Ahl-i Haqq sect sprang".[22]

Ivanow defended the view that the Paulician/Ṭonrakian elements that eventually embraced Islam, carried their faith with them and participated in the development of new syncretistic sects in the remote mountainous areas of eastern Asia Minor. To support the case that several surviving tribes preserved their Paulician origins, he brought a testimony by E. S. Soane about a "Balaki" tribe in the district of Darsim. The tribe lived among the Kurds and the Zaza and its members spoke a language which was a "mixture of Kurdish, Armenian and Arabic".[23] The Paulicians were called Bayālika by the Arabs, and the word "Balaki" seems to be a distorted version of the Arabic word.

In medieval Armenian history while Paulicianism was connected to religious heresies, later on the trends known as Ṭonrakians were closely linked with peasant and reformist movements. Violence against the Church and the nobility was often triggered by otherwise "regular" practices. In one case, for example, the cause of attacks was the donation of villages by the prince of the province to the monastery of Taṭev.[24] The move provoked peasant (*shinakan*) uprisings in protest. S. Orbelian put the date of the first wave of peasant revolts at 915.[25] In general, the riots started during the second decade of the tenth century in the region of Tamaleḳs, but they were soon brought under control.[26] The second phase lasted from 918 to 958 and involved the peasants of Aveladasht. The peasants of Gureghaberd, the earlier rebels, supported the new "brigands" or the "mischievous" factions, as they were described. The monastery of Taṭev was attacked

[22] Ibid., 8–9.

[23] W. Ivanow, *The Truth Worshippers*, 9. The source: E. B. Soane, *Grammar of the Kurmanji or Kurdish Language*, (Leiden, 1913), v.

[24] T. Saḥakian, "La Révolte Paysanne en Siwnie au X^{e} Siècle", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, Nouvelle Série, vol. I (1964), 243–252, 243.

[25] Stepanos Orbelian, *Histoire de la Siounie*, (trans.) Brosset, (St. Petersburg, 1864), 136–137.

[26] T. Saḥakian, "La Révolte Paysanne . . .", 250.

and parts of it were pillaged and destroyed. The last decade of the century saw a final phase of acts of violence against the ecclesiastical establishments.[27]

According to Aristakēs of Lastivert,[28] over 160 years after the execution of Smbat of Zareḥavan, the provinces of Apahuniḳ, the districts of Ḥarḳ and *Khnus* (Hinis), saw extremely serious events within the Church and involved members of the aristocracy, the clergy and the peasants. The events of the province of Ḥarḳ constitute the theme of two chapters in the *History* of Aristakēs.[29] The figure at the center of these troubles was Bishop Hakobos, the head of the churches of the province of Ḥarḳ. He was described as an ascetic and saintly figure surrounded by sympathizers who emulated him. Aristakēs, however, considered the virtues of Hakobos mere appearance and shrewd deception to mislead the public and conceal the heretical nature of his teachings.

By the testimony of Aristakēs again, Bishop Hakobos was a critic of the church and the clergy in particular. In the churches under his jurisdiction, he introduced several modifications, which alienated the conservatives. Hakobos chose the "worthiest" among the priests and allowed them to perform mass only three times a year. The rest he condemned to silence, and preached that the only way to seek God's grace was through repentance and prayer.[30] The mediating roles of the church and the clergy were in turn cancelled; the sacrifice of animals, as innocent victims, was banned as superfluous: the followers of Hakobos devoted themselves to monastic life, and refused to surrender even under threat of harsh punishment.[31]

After two church councils, at which he absented himself, Hakobos was betrayed by one his followers, a certain Yessayi from Erzrum. He was brought to Catholicos Sargis of Sevan (992–1016), was branded by the sign of the fox and thrown into prison. According to Aristakēs, after breaking out of prison, Hakobos went to Ṭonrak in Apahuniḳ, "the den of the beasts", where his "people lived in farms and remote places". He spent his last days in Mayyāfāriqīn.[32] Some sources speak of his conversion to Islam.

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[27] Ibid., 251.
[28] Aristakēs of Lastivert, *History*, 86.
[29] Ibid., 86–91.
[30] Ibid., 91–98.
[31] Ibid., 89–90.
[32] Ibid., 91.

Aristakēs devoted another chapter to a different series of events in Mananaghi during the first decade of the eleventh century.[33] The heresiarch of these sectarians was the monk Kunẓik whose closest associates and co-heresiarchs were three women from the nobility and a prince. In addition to female heresiarch Simplicia of Sivas, Paulicians Sheṭi and Marē, three more women join the list of female Armenian heresiarchs. These were a noble lady called Ḥranush and two sisters, Akhni and Qamara; a prince named Vẹrveṛ became their "obedient" "brother"; the latter not only converted to the "heresy", but also joined these women in spreading it and supporting the sectarians financially. Following their example, he withdrew his generous contributions to the church and after evacuating the priests, he donated his estates to the sectarian communities.

The economic support the nobility provided to the sectarians, increased their numbers and regulated their presence in Mananaghi. Aristakēs described in detail assaults on the local churches and monasteries, the destruction of the famous cross of the village of Bazmaghbūr, near the villages of Kashē and Aghūso (both estates of the aristocratic heresiarchs). Mutual acts of violence followed and a Byzantine royal delegate appeared as arbitrator and judge. Aristakēs ended his narrative by the story of Vẹrveṛ's painful death, probably of leprosy. "Fear of misleading innocent minds", prevented Aristakēs from describing the beliefs and practices of these heretics. He mentioned, however that they rejected the "church, its canons, baptism, communion, the holy mass, the cross and fasting",[34] and that they had a "silent and artless" way of praying in contrast to the ceremonious manner in which the faithful raised their songs and prayers to God.[35]

As far as the doctrines of the Ṭonrakians were concerned, Aristakēs added nothing new to Narek's letter, but for the first and only time his history revealed the social dimensions of Ṭonrakian unrest. Furthermore, it unclosed the reformist and not "heretical" objectives of some of the clergy involved in the events. What Aristakēs ascribed to Bishop Hakobos was remotely and superficially related to classic sectarian principles. Hakobos refused to give communion to members

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[33] Ibid., 91–98.

[34] Ibid., 98. The passage in the classical version: [Ayl vor haytni ē i nosa, yev mez aseli ē, aysoḳik yen zekeghetsi yev zekeghetsvo kargavoruṭyun bnav voch ẹnduneyin voch zmẹḳẹrtuṭyunẹn yev voch zmez yev zsarsarsapeli khorhurd pataragin, voch zkhach yev voch zkargavoruṭyun paḥots].

[35] Ibid., 96.

of the community because, as Aristakēs explained, "if the sinner did not repent himself, neither sacrifice nor mass could help him to attain salvation".[36] The followers of Hakobos ridiculed those who slaughtered animals as offerings, and they addressed the poor beast saying "O wretched animal, if he [the sinner] went astray and deserved death, what sin have you committed to die with him?".[37] If anything at all, these attitudes reflected radically different religious and social attitudes from the so far known sectarian beliefs and in a sense anticipated the European Reformation. Similar to Narek who presented the Ṭonrakians as a majority, Aristakēs estimated that "half" the population followed these doctrines; in other words, the dissidents were not minorities that stood apart from the rest of the "orthodox" majority. Acts of violence were committed, he says, between the "two halves" of the population, and both sides included members of all classes.[38]

The incident of Bishop Hakobos is particularly important as the most direct revelation of internal strife within the Armenian Church. Hakobos was isolating the "unworthy" and corrupt elements and allowing only the "worthy" to perform liturgy. A few decades earlier, Narek, his father Khosrov of Anzev and his uncle Anania were victims of corruption within the church and were treated as suspects. Their polemical writings were in fact "confessions of faith" addressed to their accusers in place of apologies.

About fifty years later and in the same locations, large scale persecutions were carried out against the sectarians. The figure directly involved in this phase of Ṭonrakian history was Grigor Paḥlavuni-Magistros (d. 1058/9), Byzantine-appointed Duke of Taron and Vaspurakan. Persecutions of the sectarians constituted the highlights of the political and military career of Magistros and at least four other members of his immediate family, the last of whom was his grandson Bahrām, the vizier of Fatimid caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ. In preparation for Byzantine occupation of Armenia, the Paḥlavunis and the other aristocratic houses were evacuated from their home estates in Armenia and given vast territories in Upper Mesopotamia and north Syria in exchange. To clear the region of all dissident elements, Grigor Magistros was charged by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus

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[36] Ibid., 96. The passage in the classical version: [Ṭē vor inḳẹn yurov anẑambẹn, vorov meghavẹn yev novimb chapashkharyats, nma voch hishatakẹḳ ognen yev voch pataragḳ].

[37] Op. cit.

[38] Ibid., 89.

with organizing military campaigns in the whole region. These operations lasted from 1051 to 1054. In a letter to the Syrian Patriarch, Magistros described the Mesopotamian world as part of the "holy" Byzantine Empire and himself as the Emperor's representative in every sense. The sects will not be allowed, he said, to spread their teachings there. He bluntly held the patriarch personally responsible for any "blood" that might be spilled as a consequence of negligence or defiance of orders not to support or give refuge to the sectarians. The letter ended in a stern warning: "Abolish their [sectarians'] name, literature and activity, otherwise, you will find yourself facing divine wrath".[39]

Much of what we know about sectarian-related events in the middle of the eleventh century is based on the epistles of Magistros.[40] It is in these letters that we read about seven Ṭonrakian heresiarchs: *Thodros, Ananēs, Arḳa, Sargis, Kūregh, Hesu,* and the *"red-haired dog Ghazar"*.[41] Like the founder of their sect, Smbat of Zareḥavan, these figures claimed to be "priests" without being ordained by the church, as Magistros put it.[42] In general, it seems that the movements of the heresiarchs, their literature and religious activities were not made public and easily detectable. Like the Pythagoreans, said Magistros, some of the Ṭonrakians would commit suicide rather than betray their fellow sectarians. By pleasant manners and "sweet speech" they misled and deceived the investigators, and it was through spies that the men of Magistros were led to their centers.

Over two centuries after the execution of Smbat, his headquarters, the town of Ṭonrak had still maintained its importance. Following the direction of "contaminated waters . . . I reached their source in

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[39] G. Magistros, "Letter to the Syrian Catholicos", 167–168. The passage: [Bayts patvirem ẑez, ṭuyl tvēḳ mez yev ashkharhin mer Mijagetats yev amenayn vorḳ ẹnd ishkhanuṭyamb ḥoṛomots surb ṭagavoruṭyan mi ṭẹghṭovḳ yev patvirelov zchar ḥerẑvaẓ ẑer usutsanēḳ kam ḥastatēḳ yev aha aryun aynotsik yev ẑern i glukh ẑer. Tapaletsēḳ aysuḥetev zanun ẑer yev zban yev zgorẓ, apa yeṭē voch, zoruṭyunēn Astuẓo yerevestsi i ẑez yev barkuṭyamb yurov khẹrovestsutsē ẑez].

[40] Grigor Magistros, "Epistle in reply to the letter of the Ṭulaylans, the remnants of the New Manichaeans and Ṭonrakians, who had come to the Catholicos of the Syrians, in an attempt to deceive him", *Epistles*, 165–168. The title: [Pataskhani ṭẹghṭuyn Ṭulayletseats, menatseluyn i norots Maniḳetsvots Ṭondraketsatsn, vorḳ yekeal ēin aṛ kaṭughikosn asorvots yev kamēin khabel zna].

[41] G. Magistros, "Letter to the Syrian Patriarch", 154. Hovḥan of Mayragom speaks of three Aghvanian iconoclastics called Thaddeus, Hesu and Grigor, see S. Dēr Nersēssian, "Une Apologie des Images du Septième Siècle", *Byzantion*, XVII (1944–1945), 58–87.

[42] Ibid., 154.

Ṭonrak", said Magistros, where "the fire of the evil heresy raged" in their "temple". By "divine providence" and faithful to the legacy of his "ancestor" (i.e., Grigor the Illuminator), he continued, "I eradicated the seeds of evil and heresy" during the reign of Emperor Constantine Monomachus.[43] By the help of two informers called Policarpos and Nicanor, he was led to the locations of the sectarians, which he called "dog habitats" ("*shẹnavanḳ*"), where lived "men clad as priests and multitudes of whorish women". During these raids, he confiscated, read and then destroyed their literature. Villages were burnt and their inhabitants evacuated. "I drove them outside the borders", wrote Magistros, "without inflicting any bodily harm to anyone", unlike other military men "who slayed the old and young without mercy", "branded them with the fox-sign"; some even "blinded them". Magistros claimed to have refrained from inflicting physical harm on anyone, even though the law stated that capital punishment be applied to these groups.[44]

Three trends were distinguished among the Ṭonrakians by Magistros: the first group he likened to the Epicureans and its members were "most evil" and atheistic, he said. They preached hopelessness and were "capable of taking deadly poison and ending their own lives".[45] The second group, according to him, cursed the Manichaeans but was in fact identical with them both in deeds and thoughts. The last group seems to be the largest and the most familiar. Its members, he said, lived in mixed communities; their bishops and priests were not ordained by the Armenian Church; although they claimed to be Armenian Christians, he added,[46] they adhered to distorted beliefs which had nothing in common with the orthodox faith. Magistros described these "Christians" as "dogs", repeated thrice.[47]

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[43] Ibid., "Letter to the Syrian Patriarch", 158. The passage: [Apa tesyal im pẹghtorumẹn maḳraguyn ǰruyn, vor ẓavalēr, yev ḥetevyal atrushanin Ṭondrakats, horum ṭaghyal kayr khẹmorẹn saduketsvots yev borboḳēr ṭaghyal anṭeghẹn charuṭyan, zor zoruṭyambẹn Astuẓo yev aghoṭivk mero surb ḳahanayapetin yev Lusavorchin yev nakhaḥorn ḥraman ẹnkalyal i Tiaṛnē zavurs mero surb yev ḳristosapsakyal inḳnakal arḳayin Kostandea Monomakhin maḳretsi zamenayn voromẹn charuṭyan yev pẹghzuṭyan].

[44] Ibid., 162.

[45] Ibid., 158.

[46] Ibid., 159.

[47] Op. cit. The passage: [Aylandak imn kargats yev kronits ḳristoneits . . . voroshyalḳ yen anepiskoposunẹs yev anḳahanays sheṛǰin yev asen banivḳ, yeṭē meḳ hAramyan gẹndēn yemḳ yev ḥavatov ḥamemat notsa. Bayts voch yen ḥamemat voch miov iviḳ, ayl ḥakaṛak yev nẹshanakyal miyayn ḥamanun ẓaynẹn, vorpēs shun yev shun yev shun].

The operations of Magistros contributed to broadening the circle of sectarian expansion, but failed to achieve their initial objectives. Poghos of Taron (d. 1123) referred to the sectarians of his time as the inheritors of the Manichaeans, Marcionites, Paulicians and Ṭonrakians. Like the earlier sects, he said, they were adoptionistic, i.e., in their opinion, Christ was a mere man. The testimony of Poghos added almost nothing new except establishing the continuation of the sects and their doctrines.[48] The sectarians had their own religious life independent of and in opposition to the national church. Heresiarchs claimed to be priests "without really being" such[49] and sought to "eliminate all functions of the clergy". According to Magistros, Smbat refused all ordinations by the higher clergy, and considered them frauds designed to "deceive the populace", while he resided in "fakeness, vainly claiming to be head-priest".[50] Indirectly confirming the rapport heresiarchs managed to establish with the public, Magistros warned: "Their words are smooth as olive oil but lethal as arrows".[51]

Indulgence in unrestricted pleasures were accusations directed to most sects, and Magistros explained sectarian hedonism as a bait to attract converts. Most of all he accused the heresiarchs of indiscriminate promiscuity and Smbat of Zareḥavan of homosexuality. Iconoclasm and refusal of all images, liturgy, mass and sacraments, as material phenomena were other aspects of sectarian beliefs that magistors discussed in his letter to the Patriarch of the Syrians. "I heard them and with my own eyes saw those who have no knowledge of our holy scriptures . . . uttering blasphemy that I have read in no religious scripture or in any other language. They said that they were not worshippers of matter but of God, [consequently] in their opinion, the cross, the church, the rituals, ceremonial costumes of the mass, the clergy, the sacraments and all such matters amounted to nothing . . . they addressed many foul words to the Holy Virgin the God-Bearer".[52] To demonstrate that religious rites were deceptions,

[48] See Meliksēt-Bek, "Poghos of Taron and the Ṭonrakians", *Ejmiaẓin*, IV (1960), 38. Also see Boghos of Taron, Matenadaran Ms. no. 5787, f. 294b.

[49] Grigor Magistros, "Letter to the Syrian Patriarch", 154. The passage: [. . . aṛants ḳahanayuṭyan kerbiv ḳahanayi].

[50] Op. cit. The passage: [. . . yev ḳarozēr zbolor ḳaḥanayakan nergorẓutyuneṣ vocheṇchatsutsanel yev manavand yeṭē snoti varkanel, yev nestēr baghbaghanoḳ ibrev ḳaḥanayapet].

[51] Ibid., 155. The passage: [Yev kakugh yen banḳ notsa ḳan zzēṭ yev inḳeanḳ vorpēs zsẹlaḳ].

[52] Ibid., 156–157. The passage: [. . . merovin isk akanǰok lẹvyal yev achoḳ tesyal

and to make a parody of the symbolism of the Holy Mass and the Eucharist, heresiarch Kūregh once took a handful of the bread of communion, dipped it in the wine and threw it away before the eyes of the congregation. Always according to Magistros, Kūregh dismissed all Christian doctrines as hallucinations and myths. On another occasion, Kūregh addressed the public, exclaiming, "O vain hopes of the Christians, what do you expect to gain?", and the people replied, says Magistros, "that which is worthiest for man".[53]

Tracing their origin to the Paulicians, who in turn originated from the sect of Paul of Samosata, Magistros believed that the Ṭonrakians rejected both the Old and the New Laws, but in public they swore to be true Christians and followers of the scriptures, the Apostles and the Psalms; they anathematized the heretics. When asked—apparently by him—why they rejected Christian baptism, since it was made obligatory by Christ and his disciples, they said that baptism "meant death". Furthermore, according to Magistros, they considered all meals "agape"s and rejected the mass; they declared allegiance to Paul and anathematized Peter. The most intriguing point Magistros made was the worship of the Creator-Demiurge: "They say that Moses saw not God but the Devil, who according to them is the creator of the heavens, the earth, the human race and all the creatures, and still consider themselves Christians".[54] Finally, the re-

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zbazumẹs i notsun vorḳ voch kaskaẓinẹn gitel mez zgirẹs surbẹs. Aṛaǰi yepiskoposats yev bazmuṭyan joghoverdyanẹn ḥayḥoyuṭyun yel i berano notsa, zorẹs voch yemḳ enṭertsyal i bolor matyanẹs astvaẓeghenẹs yev voch haylots ḥayḥoyich lezvats. Vorḳ asēyin yeṭē meḳ voch yemḳ nūṭapasht ayl astvaẓapashtḳ. yev zkhach yev zekeghetsi yev zgest ḳaḥanayi yev zpataragagorẓuṭyun, zaysosik vochinch ḥamarimḳ, ayl zkhorhurd notsa, yev ayl bazums . . . Yev ayl bazum ḥayḥoyuṭyun i surb kuysẹn Astvaẓaẓin].

[53] Op. cit. The passage: [. . . voch yeṭē mi yev mi inch chẹḥamarin i merots ḳristosavand davanuṭyantsẹs patshaj gol, ayl aṛaspelẹs yev baǰaghmunẹs imẹn, zorẹs vomẹn i notsunts haytnapēs sut ḳaḥana ḥakaṛakyal ẹnd merots, asēr bazmuṭyan joghovuyn: O snoti huysḳ ḳristoneits, ardeoḳ zinch huys uniḳ duḳ? Yev noḳa pataskhani tẹvyal asen zpatshajaguynẹs mer. Isk na asēr ambarisht barbaṛov aṣyal khẹmor koghovẹs aṛnēr žeṛambẹn yev ṭatsyal i gini artaḳs žẹgēr yev asēr: Ayd ē khabeuṭyun ḳristoneits. Yev ays ēr Kūregh aniẓyal aṛajnordẹn Ṭondrakats].

[54] Ibid., 161. The passage: [. . . ayl zamenaynẹn ẓaghẹr aṛnen zḥin yev znor orēnẹs yev horjam haytni hartsyalk linin, aniẓen sastik, uranan yev yerdnun, yev ayspisi khabēuṭyan voch yem teghyak? avagik Poghikyantḳẹd, vorḳ i Poghosē Samosattsẹvo deghyal, horjam žernarkyal ḥartsanemḳ, asen yeṭē ḳristonyayḳ yemḳ, zavetaranẹn zaṛaḳyalẹn saghmosen hamenayn jam yev horjam ḥartsanemḳ yeṭē endēr voch mẹḳẹrtiḳ zor ḥramayyats Ḳristos yev aṛaḳyalḳẹn? Asen, "Voch gitēḳ duḳ zkhorhurd mẹḳẹrtuṭyan, mez voch ē p̣uyṭ mẹḳẹrtel, ḳanzi mẹḳẹrtelẹn mah ē, yev Hisus voch asats hẹnṭrisẹn vasn pataragi, ayl vasn amenayn seghano". Yev asen zPoghos siremḳ

jection of the family as a sacred unit and a free communal style of life was also ascribed to them by Magistros: "They never refrained from committing obscenities without discrimination between members of the family or between men and women".[55]

About a hundred years later, and upon the request of Prince Aṛūẓ of Amayḳ in Ṭẹlkuran, a great-grandson of Magistros, Catholicos Shnorḥali, wrote a treatise as arbiter in a christological dispute among theologians. On this occasion he traced signs of a renewed Ṭonrakism or the teachings of Smbat in the positions of the sides involved in the dispute and warned them against falling into the Manichaean heresy, or Arianism, Nestorianism, Paulianism, etc.[56] The orthodox position of the church, he clarified, was that the Word, or the Logos, became body or man in the physical sense of the word.[57] In the same text, Nersēs also referred to the radical rejection of the sacraments by the Ṭonrakians.

The subject of sectarians was again raised in another letter by Shnorḥali concerning the conversion of Armenian Sun Worshippers or *Arevordiḳ* in Samosata; he had read, as he said, their scriptures and was well informed about their faith. The *Arevodiḳ*, he said, worshipped the Demiurge or the "Devil", and they were in many ways similar to the "Bogomils" or Paulicians in the Balkans. According to him, the Armenian Sun Worshippers of Samosota had preserved some elements of nature-worship, like the veneration of the poplar and the beech tree as holy trees (relics of ancient Armenian pagan religion).[58]

The polemical works of Grigor of Taṭev (1346–1409) constituted the last and perhaps the most academic pages in medieval Armenian polemical literature. The first volume of Grigor's *Book of Questions*[59] was devoted completely to the fatalists, the Manichaeans, natural theologians, Jews, followers of the heresy of Arius, Nestorians, and

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yev zPetros aniẓemḳ yev Movsēs zAstvaẓ voch yetes ayl zsatana yev asen ararich yerkni yev yerkri zsatana yev amenayn mardkayin seṛi yev amenayn steghẓvaẓots, yev zinḳeanẹs anvanen ḳristonyays].

[55] Ibid., 160. The passage: [Yev ays inch yen anorēnuṭyunḳ charagorẓatsẹn aynotsik voch pahḳ notsa, yeṭē voch yerkẹnchin, haytni yev voch khẹtruṭyunḳ arants yev kanants yev voch entanyats].

[56] See Nersēs Shnorḥali, *Encyclical Letters*, 240–289.

[57] Ibid., 269–271. The passages where he refers to Christ then to the Ṭonrakians: [Banẹn marmin yeghev]; [Lẹvaḳ darẑyal, zi vomanḳ i molar ḳaḥanayits zẓazkyal garshahot pẹghẓuṭyun aniẓeluyn Sembata Ṭondraketsvo verstin sharjen i korẓanumẹn lẹsoghatsẹn].

[58] Ibid., 223–229.

[59] Grigor of Taṭev, *Book of Questions* (Constantinople, 1729–30).

the *Tajiks* (or the Muslims). The importance which the sectarian problem was given and the range of issues that came within the scope of the author, point to the active presence of non-orthodox factions in Armenia and all regions inhabited by Armenians. One of the longest chapters in this first volume was devoted to the *Tajiks*. Sharply diverging from tradition, he explained the origination of sects as the natural consequence of rationalism applied to matters of faith. "While natural cognition may wander off and fall into skepticism", he observed, "faith never errs concerning its object, the Truth".[60] The Persian-speaking *Tajiks* stood very close to the Armenian sectarians, at least with respect to what they rejected: the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the holy sacraments, the sacred icons, the Old and New Testaments, etc.[61] In line with most medieval polemicists who defined Islam as a Christian heresy, Grigor traced the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad to a period of study he spent with an Arian monk called Bekhira Sargis from the Sinai.[62] Obviously, by relating the origination of Islam to Christian heresies of Arius and Cerinthus,[63] he was tracing common doctrinal points between the Armenian sects and the Muslims, with whom they established an alliance. In another respect, the Treatise was an indication of the active presence of sectarians who shared some doctrines with Muslims of Persian nationality, or language, and who, judging from Grigor's text, belonged to a sub-Shīʿī sect. There is also a good possibility that Grigor's opponents belonged to a syncretistic sect of Armenian origin established in Persian Armenia, just south of Armenia.[64]

After Grigor's *Book of Questions*, and to the end of the eighteenth century, no reference is made to the sectarians that we are aware of. In 1837, the Synodus of Ējmiaẓin was informed of a Ṭonrakian community in Arkhvelli (presently Manṭash in the province of Shirak, northwest of Armenia). These sectarians had originally arrived there from the district of Hinis in the province of Ḥarḳ. Eventually, the investigators discovered a text entitled *The Key of Truth* compiled by

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[60] Grigor of Taṭev, "Treatise against the Tajiks", *Book of Questions*, 173. The passage: [Bnakanẹn molori i jẹshmartuṭenē yev tarakusi, yev ḥavatẹn anmolar yev antarakuys ē i jẹshmartuṭyun].

[61] For the list of questions, see Ibid., 49–51.

[62] Ibid., 120–121.

[63] Ibid., 50.

[64] See S. B. Dadoyan, "Grigor of Taṭev: Treatise against the Tajiks", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 7, 2 July (1996), 193–204, initially paper read at the "*Workshop on Muslim perceptions of Christianity; Christian perceptions of Islam* of The Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies" (Amman, Aug. 21–24, 1995).

a certain Deacon Hovḥannēs during the last decade of the eighteenth century, who later on was said to have converted to Islam. *The Key of Truth* bore strong traces of medieval sectarian doctrines, but neither the language nor the style and the doctrines expounded there provide ground to consider it a direct copy of some original Paulician-Ṭonrakian religious text of the eighth or ninth centuries. Whatever its circumstances, the text is the only sectarian scripture available as a document for students of sectarian history.[65]

Sectarians in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria—10th to 11th centuries

Armenian emigrations to north Syria constitute the immediate background of the Armenians in Egypt during the eleventh century. The southern parts of Upper Mesopotamia and north Syria frequently received large Armenian communities. Syrian Patriarch Bar Salibi of Amida (d. 1171) put the date of the southward flow of Armenians and their occupation of Syrian monasteries in the late 720's, as a direct outcome of the Council of Manazkert summoned by Catholicos Hovḥan of Ozun in 726 to reconcile the Syriac and Armenian churches.[66]

The Paḥlavunis and the other aristocratic houses had their interest in clearing their newly acquired estates of all dissident elements, but prior to the expulsion of the Ṭonrakians into north Syria, the exodus of Armenians had already started before the end of the tenth century. In 962, Emperor John Tsimisces settled large sectarian communities in the province of Sivas and the fortresses on the Euphrates, in Membij and Dalūk near ʿAynṭab. A few years later, Tarsus in Cilicia, Melitene and Antioch saw similar moves.[67] The Armenian emigrations reached their height in the year 990, according to Michael the

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[65] For the subject of the new Ṭonrakians of Arkhvelli see:
– F. Conybeare, *The Key of Truth: A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia.*
– E. Tēr Minassian, *From the History of the Origin and Development of the Medieval Sects.*
– N. Taghavarian, *The Origin of Christian Protestantism and the Qizilbashis* [Ḳristoneakan boghoḳakanuṭyan yev gẹzẹlpashneru aghandin ẓẹnundẹ], (Constantinople, 1914).
– V. Grigorian, "New Information on the Author of *Key of Truth,* Deacon Hovḥannēs", ["Nor teghekuṭyunner 'Banali J̣eshmartuṭyan' yerki heghinak Hovḥannēs Yerētsi masin"], *Banber Matenadarani,* 5 (1969), 333–344.

[66] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien,* vol. III, 133.

[67] See A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations,* 240; M. Chamchian, *History of the Armenians* [Paṭmuṭyun Ḥayots], (Venice, 1784), vol. II, 858–859.

Syrian, when the Greeks occupied almost all Arab occupied lands in Greater Armenia, Cappadocia and north Syria.[68] "Some Armenians", said Michael the Syrian, "penetrated into the fortresses situated in the mountains and established themselves in these positions", others moved to Constantinople and Egypt.[69] During the reign of Basil II (976–1025), Armenians were transplanted in the Syrian Shayzar and throughout the valley of the Orontes.[70] A century later some fortresses on the Euphrates were still held by Armenian sectarians. The chroniclers of the Crusades speak of "heretics" in these fortresses. One of the earliest references is of the year 1097: on their way from Comana to southeast of Coxon (Goksun) some knights passed by a castle "not far from the valley of Orontes" and that was "held by Paulician heretics".[71] Though exaggerated there is some truth in Laurent's remark that the southeastern frontiers of the Empire were left to the Armenians of all sorts, I may add, in the face of the Seljuks.[72]

Large Armenian communities inhabited Syria during the tenth and eleventh centuries, according to Surmeyan.[73] Most of these Armenians eventually mixed with the local population; villages in the region of the Wādī al-Naṣāra and east of Latakieh in the north, preserved some relics of their Armenian past and distinguishable features of their origin (like language, customs, names, folklore, etc.).[74] In Upper Mesopotamia, north Syria and several regions of Kurdistan, the origins of the Afshārs, Yezīdīs and Qizilbashs are traced to Paulician communities that adopted sectarian and syncretistic Islam and found safety in the tribal areas of Kurdistan.

Byzantine attempts to gather the dissident Armenian Christians of Syria and Palestine under the control of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, failed and antagonized them. Instead of being resisted, the Seljuks were allowed an easy passage to Syria.[75] There is a very intriguing

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[68] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, III, 133.

[69] Ibid., 198.

[70] G. Schlumberger, *L'Epopée Byzantine à la Fin du Dixième Siècle*, vol. II, 151.

[71] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1954), 191–192.

[72] M. J. Laurent, *Byzance et les Turcs Seldjoucides dans l'Asie Occidentale jusqu'en 1081* (Paris, 1914), 67.

[73] Artavazd Surmeyan, *History of the Armenians of Aleppo* [Patmutyun Halepi hayots], 939.

[74] A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 362.

[75] M. J. Laurent, *Byzance*, 4–6. Also see A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 252–254.

yet unconfirmed report related to the Armenians of Syria during the early eleventh century. In the midst of his brutal persecutions of the Christians, in the year 1015, the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (996–1021) decreed that Bishop Mesrop of Jerusalem be appointed head of the community and be in charge of church properties there. Furthermore, he is said to have granted the Armenians complete freedom to pursue their faith exempting them from persecution and additional taxes.[76]

In the middle of the century, between the years 1051 and 1054 Magistros drove the Ṭonrakians to the south and southwest. With the exception of one specific reference, I have not been able to find any direct account of the whereabouts of these communities. In the context of his narration of the events of the years 1097 and 1098, Michael the Syrian speaks of the siege of Antioch by the Crusaders. After the nine month siege of the city he says, the "chiefs of the Turks who were Qashean and Aghoussian", having reached an impossible situation, left the city to go to Aleppo. But "some Armenians attacked him" (now in singular) and took his head to the Franks.[77] The so called "Qashean" and "Aghoussian" Muslim Turks in Antioch, in my opinion, were Armenian sectarians, who were natives of the two villages of Kashē and Aghūso, which both Aristakēs and Magistros spoke of as Ṭonrakian strongholds and properties of the nobility who donated them to the sectarians. Magistros himself used the two terms, i.e., Kashēans and Aghūsians, to refer to the sectarians of those regions. It is possible that after being driven to the south, some of them joined the Seljuks. On their way to Seljuk-held Aleppo, the Armenians who attacked the Kasheans and Aghusians were most probably "orthodox" Armenians who fought in alliance with the Crusaders, during the early stages of the Frankish penetration. Vizier Bahrām was on very good terms with the Franks and was involved in the battles on their side. The Armenians looked upon the Crusaders as their rescuers, only to learn the contrary the hard way. According to Runciman, around the year 1077, "an Armenian bishop had travelled to Rome to secure his interest".[78] Medieval Armenian historians included Rome

[76] Astvazatur H. Hovhannesiants, *History of Jerusalem* [Patmuṭyun Yerusaghemi], vol. I (Jerusalem, ?), 123; A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 380.

[77] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, 187.

[78] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 202–203. The source is: "Letter of Gregory in Jaffe", *Monumenta Gregoriana*, VIII, i, *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*, vol. II, 423–424.

in the Mediterranean journey of Grigor Martyrophil, son of Magistros, during the early 1070's. Since very little is written about the details of this journey, and in view of the discrepancy of the dates, nothing can be established about the identity of this "Armenian bishop".

Michael the Syrian has a story that indicates a case of Armenian sectarian-Seljuk cooperation. According to him, a group of Armenians, whom he calls "*Bene Bogousag*", were the masters of Siberek, north of Edessa. During the first invasion of the Turks "their father" travelled to Baghdad and Khurasan. There he converted to Islam and obtained "certificates" from the Caliph and the great Sultan in terms of which the Bene Bogousag were allowed mastery over these regions. "This is the reason why", explains Michael the Syrian, "they (the Bene Bogousag) had all become Muslims since then". As the allies of the Turks, the Bene Bogousag fought against the Crusaders. In 1144, when a certain Zangid general Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn besieged the city of Edessa, these Muslim Armenians or the Bene Bogousag took part in the operation.[79] The sectarian nature of this community can be related to their name, i.e., *Bogousag*. The word is the distorted transliteration of *Poghosak* or *Poghosik* which is the diminutive of *Poghos*, i.e., Paul. The Paulicians were also known as *Poghikian* or short form of *Poghosikian*, and it seems that the connection of the Bene Bogousag to a sectarian background can be assumed with reasonable certainty.

The Arevordiḳ *or the* Shamsiyya al-Arman *in Syria*

The Armenian Sun Worshippers, or the *Arevordiḳ* ("Children of the Sun") or the *Shamsiyya al-Arman*, and the *akritas* or the marcher state of Philaretus the Armenian around Germanica, are two more themes related to the history of the Armenians in Syria during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. *Arevordiḳ* is one of the last names under which sectarians were known during the eleventh century. Few studies have so far been made of the subject. It is generally accepted that Grigor Magistros was the first author to use the term; over three centuries earlier, without using the term *Arevordiḳ*, Hovḥan of Ōzun included

[79] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, 247. Also see: J. B. Chabot, "Une Episode de l'Histoire des Croisades", *Mélanges Offerts à M. Gustave Schlumberger*, (Paris, 1924).

the worship of the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies in general, as part of Paulician doctrines.[80]

In the *Book of Heresies* the Paulicians were said to worship the sun as Christ, and in the epic of *Digenes Akrites* the heroes swore "by the sweet Lord Sun and his sweet mother", identifying Christ with the sun.[81] Magistros saw the origin of sun worship among the Armenian *Arevordiḳ* in Zoroastrian religion. In public they claim to be "true Christians", he said, but "we are aware of the sort of heresy and impudence they are involved in".[82] Overlooking previous references to sun worship among the Armenian sects, H. Barṭikian believes that the "movement" of the *Arevordiḳ* started during the eleventh century and survived during the next.[83] Indeed, it was after the middle of the twelfth century that Shnorḥali was involved in problems related to a community of Armenian *Arevordiḳ* in the city of Samosata. These sectarians applied to be readmitted to the Armenian church and the authorities of Samosata wrote to Nersēs to inquire about the conditions and procedures for their conversion.

According to Shnorḥali, and Magistros earlier, the *Arevordiḳ* were Armenians; however, some historians, like G. Vantsian (the first to deal with this sect) adopted the hypothesis that these were not Armenians.[84] I find it strange that he should have overlooked the case of the *Arevordiḳ* of Samosata and Shnorḥali. Why would the latter express his pleasure at the news of the conversion of non-Armenians? In his instructions, Shnorḥali urged the people in charge to show leniency toward these sectarians, who, he said, "belonged to the Armenian race by birth and language".[85]

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[80] Hovḥan of Ōẑun, "Treatise against the Paulicians", 38. The passage: [Isk zaregakeṇ aghachel kametsyal asen arevik, lusik yev i ẓaẓuk zodayin yev zvernavor devseṇ kochen eṣt Manya yev Simovni kakhardi moluṭyantseṇ].

[81] V. Nersēssian, *The Ṭondrakian Movement*, 67.

[82] G. Magistros, "Letter to the Syrian Patriarch", 161. The passage: [Aha yev ayl vomanḳ i zradasht mogē, mog parskakanḳ yev ayjẹm i notsunts deghyal aregaknapashtḳ, zor arevordisen anvanen yev aha yen haydẹm gavaṛi bazumḳ yev inkeanḳ ḳristonyayḳ zinḳeanes haytnapēs kochen. Bayts yeṭē vorpisi moloruṭyamb yev anaṛakuṭyamb varin, gitemḳ zi voch yes anteghyak].

[83] H. Barṭikian, "Les Arevordi (Fils du Soleil) en Armenie et Mesopotamie et l'épitre du Catholicos Nerses le Gracieux", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, Nouvelle Série, V (1968), 271–288, esp. 271–272.

[84] Grigor Vantsian, "The Problem of the Arevordiḳ" [Arevordots khẹndiṛẹ], *Handēs Amsorya*, 1 (1896), 12–19.

[85] Nersēs IV Snorḥali (Clajensis), *Encyclical Letters* [Endhanrakan Ṭughṭḳ], (Jerusalem, 1871), 223. Translation: *Sancti Nersetis Clajensis Armeniorum Catholici Opera*, (trans.) J. Cappeletti, 2 vols. (Venice, 1833). The French translation of "Letter addressed to

In addition to Shnorḥali, two of his contemporaries also referred to militant Sun Worshippers in Syria. In his *Chronicle*, Matthew of Edessa or *Matṭeos Uṛḥayetsi* (d. 1138/1144), told that Seljuk chieftain Balak was killed in the year 1124/5 by the arrow of an "*Arevapasht*" (literally "sun-worshipper") positioned in the fortress of Membij.[86] During the last decade of the tenth century and later on as well, many fortresses in Membij, Dalūk, 'Ayntạb, and others on the Euphrates were in the hands of Paulicians,[87] and it seems that these "heretics" were still holding some of the strategic positions and were involved in local conflicts. In his *Damascus Chronicle*, or *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, Ibn al-Qalānisī (d. 1160) spoke of Armenian "*Shamsiyya*"s in the citadel of Damascus, who were the collaborators of Būrid Amīr Shihāb ed-dīn Maḥmūd Tughtekīn (1135–1139) in a plot against the latter's commander Bazwag.[88]

During the twelfth century, Poghos of Taron complained about the destructive activities of sectarians who according to him were Sun Worshippers.[89] Daviṭ son of Alavik in turn wrote: "The Paulicians or the Mẹzghnēans are of the race of *Arevordiḳ*". The next series of references to militant *Arevordiḳ*s belong to the fourteenth century. In his "Epistle to the Pope", Catholicos Mẹkhiṭar of Aparan spoke of Armenian *Arevordiḳ* in Manazkert, who also worshipped various trees and flowers; according to him, their faith was derived from Zoroastrian religion.[90] Magistros made similar connections between the latter and Ṭonrakian beliefs.[91] So-called "Persian customs", nocturnal orgies and cult rituals were also ascribed to the Sun Worshippers in the same text by Mẹkhiṭar.[92] Finally, there is an intriguing testimony about

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the city of Samosata concerning the conversion of the Arevordiḳ", is Appendix to H. Barṭikian, "Les Arevordi . . .", 282–288.

[86] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle* (Yerevan, 1973), 148.

[87] A. Alboyajian, *History*, 240.

[88] Ibn al-Qalānisī, Abū Ya'lā Ḥamzah b. Asad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad, *Damascus Chronicle* (Ta'rīkh Ibn al-Qalānisī or Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq), (Beirut, 1908), 264.

[89] For the text of Poghos of Taron, see F. Conybeare, *Key of Truth*, Appendix viii.

[90] The information is from Ghevond Alishan, "The Ancient Faiths of the Armenians" [Ḥin Ḥavatḳ Ḥayots], *Bazmavēp*, 52 (1894). Alishan takes up the same theme in: *The Ancient Faiths or the Pagan Religion of the Armenians*, (Venice, 1910). In a third work, he makes references to the Arevordiḳ: *Nersēs Shnorḥali and his Time* [Nersēs Shnorhalin yev yur jamankẹ], (Venice, 1873), 399–404.

[91] G. Magistros, "Letter to Syrian Patriarch", 161. The phrase: [Zradasht mogē, mogḳ parskakanḳ].

[92] Gh. Alishan, *The Ancient Faiths*, 102. The passage: [Yev vomanḳ haykazyanḳ yev ḥay lezvav, arevapashtḳ, yev kochin Arevordiḳ. Soḳa chunin voch gir yev dẹpruṭyun, ayl avanduṭyamb usutsanen harḳẹn zordisẹn yuryants, zor nakhniḳ notsa

the fourteenth century Sun Worshippers: at the end of the fourteenth century, according to historian Ṭovma of Meẓoṗ, Tamerlane (Timur Lang) completely destroyed the villages of the "Armenian *Arevordiḳs*", which he names as Sogh, Shimrah, Safari, and Marash. However, these Sun Worshippers, always according to Ṭovma, soon regained their power and positions and flourished again in Amida and Mardin as well.[93]

The akritic *state of Philaretus the Armenian in Germanica*

A peculiar phenomenon in Cilicia and parts of Upper Mesopotamia and north Syria during the second half of the eleventh century marked another phase in sectarian political-military history. It was the State of Vaḥram Varajnuni, better known as Philaretus the Armenian, a figure familiar to students of eleventh century history and of the early Crusades.[94] The State of Philaretus followed the Byzantine occupation of Greater Armenia (Vaspuragan in 1021, the Bagratuni Kingdom and Ani in 1045, the principality of Kars in 1064). The fall of Manazkert (1071), Edessa and other Byzantine-controlled lands to the Turks virtually separated eastern Anatolia and left the region open before the Turks. Byzantine allowed the border regions the status of semi-independent principalities. During this transitional period Philaretus took advantage of the temporary power vacuum and in

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usyalḳ ēin i zradasht mogē, andrushanin petē, yev ẹnd vor koghmẹn yerṭal aregakn ẹnd aynẹm yerkerpagen yev patven zẓaṛẹn barti yev zshushan ẓaghikẹn yev . . . yev zaylsẹn, vor zdēmsẹn yuryants sherǰetsutsanen ẹnddēm aregakanẹn yev nmanetsutsanen zinḳeanẹs notsa ḥavatov yev gorẓov . . . yev aṛnen matagh nẹnǰetselots yev tan zamenayn hasẹs ḥay yeritsu. Sotsa aṛaǰnordẹn kochi ḥazerpet yev yurakanchūr ami yerku angam kam aveli ameneḳyan ayr yev kin usdẹr yev dusdẹr, joghovin i gub mi huyj khavarin yev . . .].

[93] Ṭovma of Meẓoṗ, *History of Timur and his Successors*, (ed.) K. Shaḥnazarian, (Paris, 1860), 45. This source was not available to me; the reference is from H. Barṭikian, "Les Arevordiḳ", 274.

[94] In addition to the several references we find in Bar Hebraeus, Michael the Syrian, the Arab and Armenian historians, to which I shall refer gradually, the following studies of Philaretus are useful: Yeghia Ḳasuni-Commagenatsi, *Philaretus the Armenian* [Pilardos ḥayẹ], (Aleppo, 1930); Joseph Laurent, "Byzance et Antioche sous le Curopalate Philarète", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, IX (1929), 61–72. The article was then published in a volume of collected articles by J. Laurent, *Études d'Histoire Arménienne*, (Louvain, 1971), 148–158; C. J. Yarnley, "Philaretos: Armenian Bandit or Byzantine General?", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, IX (1972), 331–353; N. Adonts has a brief section: "La famille de Philarète" in "Notes Armeno-Byzantines", *Byzantion*, IX (1934), 377–382.

collaboration with the militant sectarian Armenians, created a marcher state in and around Germanica (province of modern Marash). According to Michael the Syrian, Philaretus was not taking territories and cities from the Turks, rather, it was the Greeks who allowed him to establish himself to protect these regions.[95] In the deserted Byzantine territories and in the face of the dangers of Turkish rule, the Christian population welcomed Philaretus as a lesser evil. In the north, and for a short while, Armenian princes evacuated from Armenia maintained the lands they were given in Upper Mesopotamia by Byzantium: Gagik of Ani, the last Bagratuni king, was in Cappadocia, Atom and Abū Sahl Arẓruni were in Sivas, Ṭoṛnik Mamikonian in Sassun, Gagik of Kars in Comana.[96] Between the years 1073 and 1078, Gagik, Ṭoṛnik, and Vassak (son of Magistros) died in circumstances in which Philaretus was involved.

Between the years 1070 and 1074, the state of Philaretus extended over Ẓovḳ, Melitene, Ḳessun, Birejik, Arevendan (Ravendel), Tall Bāshir, and Germanica; in the year 1078, Antioch was added to it.[97] As renegade and heretic, Philaretus was a despised figure in the region. He led an uprising in the Byzantine army by Armenian soldiers "who objected to the Byzantine church"[98]. In 1069, shortly after his appointment as Curopalete, he betrayed the empire by allowing the Turks to pass through the lands he was given to protect.[99] Runciman describes his associates as "separated by their religion from the rest of their compatriots", "hated by the Syrian Christians . . . and distrusted by the Turks, whose disunion alone enabled them to survive".[100] M. Canard in turn considered Philaretus a "renegade" of his nation and faith.[101] Tall Bāshir, the native town of Paḫlavuni prince vizier Bahrām, fell within the control of Philaretus, and it seems that his expulsion was related to obvious conflicts with the men of Philaretus.[102]

The terms and contexts in which Matthew of Edessa presented Philaretus, leave little doubt concerning his non-orthodox background.

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[95] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, 174.
[96] C. J. Yarnley, "Philaretos", 333.
[97] A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 410.
[98] J. Laurent, *Byzance et Antioche*, 148.
[99] M. Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, vol. I (Constantinople, 1914), 1296.
[100] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 196.
[101] M. Canard, "Un Vizier Chrétien a l'Époque Fatimide", *Miscellanaea Orientalia*, (London, 1973), 90.
[102] M. Canard, "Les Arméniens en Égypte a l'Époque Fatimide", *Miscellanaea* 157.

He was a "faithless Christian, neither Armenian (in faith) nor Greek", said Matthew; he was "a lawless and most evil prince, first born of the Devil, precursor of corruption, the *Nēṛ* (or Anti-Christ) inhabited by evil spirits".[103] "He held his Christian faith in corruption", and "denounced Christ, hoping to gain glory and favours from the Persians, but gained none".[104] Philaretus inspired fear in almost everyone. On his return from Egypt around the year 1078/9, Catholicos Vaḥram-Grigor Martyrophil (or *Vkayasēr*) declined to come back to his original see that fell within the territories under the control of Philaretus.[105] Bar Hebraeus in turn described him as a "very unjust" man who "laid his hands on the princes of Antioch, took their riches and divided it among the troops who were with him".[106] The military successes of Philaretus were to an important degree due to the expansion of his sectarian associates in a vast geographical region. Philaretus acquired a unique position of power that, under the circumstances, the Armenian princes could never attain.

A good guide to the study of this second sectarian state after the fall of Paulician Tephrike in 872, is its timing. The persecutions of Magistros took place between 1051 and 1054; ten years after the latter's death, in 1068, Philaretus started working toward the creation of his state precisely in the regions into which Magistros had driven the Ṭonrakians. One of his victims was a Paḥlavuni and the other, Ṭoṛnik Mamikonian was a close relative and associate of the Paḥlavunis. In both cases Philaretus had a direct interest in vacating their positions and occupying the lands under their control. Gradually, and in alliance with the Muslims, "heretical" rule replaced that of the "establishment". The most picturesque yet the harshest image of the rivalry between Philaretus and the Armenian aristocracy, was Ṭoṛnik's assassination. The latter's head was shared as a prize by Philaretus and the Arab Amīr of Mayyāfāriqīn: the upper part of the skull served as a drinking flask for the former, the latter got the lower jaw.[107] After the liquidation of Ṭoṛnik (1073–1075), Philaretus

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[103] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle* (Jerusalem, 1869), 248. The passage: [Ēr anḥavat ḳristonya, voch ḥay gitelov zna yev voch ḥoṛom . . . anorēn amenachar ishkhan, andranik vordi satanayi karapet pẹghzuyn yev Neṛẹn divabnak].

[104] Ibid., 282. The passage: [. . . yeghev uratsogh Kristosi . . . karẓēr aynu paṛavoryal i parsits, zor voch paṛavoretsav].

[105] M. Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, vol. II, 1303, 1313.

[106] The Chronography of Gregory Abul Faraj, (trans.) E. A. W. Budge (Oxford, 1932), 228.

[107] Y. Kasuni, *Philaretus the Armenian*, 28–29.

turned to Antioch, the last Byzantine-held city in the region. Following the assassination of Vassak Paḫlavuni, the Byzantine-appointed Duke, he annexed it to his state. According to Matthew of Edessa Vassak Paḫlavuni was attacked by two "*ḥatat*"s in the market place of Antioch.[108] The word "*ḥatat*", as it appears in the manuscript, is meaningless in Armenian. Modern editors of Matthew's *Chronicle* "corrected" the word as "*ḥastat*" (i.e., stable) suggesting an equally meaningless term in the context. The rest of the story, however, reveals the identity of these "*ḥatat*"s. After the assassination of Vassak, Philaretus was "invited" by the people of Antioch to take over the governorship of the city. He immediately eliminated about seven hundred of these "*ḥatat*"s. The mystery of the word at this point dissipates. I believe "*ḥatat*" is the Armenian transliterated form of the Arabic *ḥadath*, the singular of *aḥdāth*, or the urban youth militia in Syrian cities.[109] These militant Muslim organizations were naturally opposed to Byzantine rule and its representatives in Syria and were active against them.

While on the subject of militant urban organizations, a brief remark is in order about a so far unexplored yet very important issue concerning the possible link between the Armenian sectarians and the medieval Armenian youth organizations or the brotherhoods. The issue is similar to the possible yet unestablished relations between the Islamic Youth or *Futuwwa* organizations and the Ismāʿīlīs and Sufism. The earliest reference to Armenian youth organizations was made by Matthew of Edessa, who for the first time used the word "*manketi*", the equivalent of the Arabic *fatā*, and for their leader, the term "*manktavag*", the equivalent of the Arabic *muqaddam*, or major. Matthew related that in the year 1140, Armenian "mankti"s arrived in Antioch as armed escorts of a caravan of dried fish from Lake Van. As they were feasting in the market place, a quarrel broke out between them and local people. Judging from Matthew's account of violence that followed, the "*ketrij*"s (braves) or the *manketis* were well trained for such confrontations and reacted swiftly to any perceived insult or mistreatment.[110] During the same periods in Syria, there were local youth organizations known as *aḥdāth* or the "Jeunes Gens" that formed local "urban militant organizatons".[111] These youths were led by their

[108] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 140.
[109] See Thierry Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie sous la Domination Fatimide*, 2 vols., (Damascus, 1969).
[110] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 226.
[111] Thierry Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, vol. I, XXI.

muqaddams[112] and were quite similar to the *Fityān* of Baghdad and the *Akhī* organizations of Anatolia.

The Armenian Sun Worshippers in Syria seem to have been such groups of militant youths involved in local conflicts with vague yet anti-establishment ideals and bizarre customs. But although an intellectual intuition suggests the inevitability of links between the militant sectarians and the medieval Armenian Youth organizations, little material proof is available at this stage of my research to formulate a hypothesis. After Matthew's reference to Armenian Youths in north Syria, and during the same periods, we have accounts of a group of "Armenian militant *kẹtrijs*" that were in charge of guarding the royal palaces in Fatimid Egypt. In 1171, when Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's troops sieged the palace, these *kẹtrijs* eventually perished during the violent battles and the fire that destroyed the buildings.[113]

If this information is accurate, we can establish for the first time a link between the Armenian militant factions that arrived in Fatimid Egypt with Badr al-Jamālī (at the end of 1073) and the medieval Armenian youth organizations in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria. The private army of Badr was formed mostly of Muslim Armenians from Syria, where there may also have been Muslim Armenian youth organizations. But in general, the career and objectives of such youth organizations were never made explicit, through conventional channels at least. The historian Tēr Miḳaelian wonders about the "secret objectives" in the activities of these factions.[114] The main and most explicit indication of the expansion of the Brotherhoods or Youth organizations in Upper Mesopotamia was the "Constitution of the Brotherhood of the City of Erzenka" (or Arzinjan) in two parts, written in 1280 by Hovḥannēs of Erzenka.[115]

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[112] Ibid., vol. II, 679.

[113] H. Sufian, *The Armenian Princes and Mamluks during the Fatimid Period* [Yegiptosi ḥay memluknerẹn u ishkhannerẹ faṭimiakan sheṟjanin], (Cairo, 1928).

[114] Nupar Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community in Egypt during the Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries* [Yegiptaḥay gaghutẹ 10–15 darerum], (Beirut, 1980), 221.

[115] The question of medieval Armenian brotherhoods was first raised by Levon Khachikian in two articles: "The Brotherhood of Erzenka organized in 1280" [1280 Ṭvakanin Yerzenkayum kazmakerpvaẓ yeghbayruṭyunẹ], *Newsletter of the Academy of Sciences of the ASSR* [Teghekagir HSSR Gituṭyunneri Academiayi], 12 (1951), 73–84. "The Constitution of the Brotherhood of the city of Erzenka—1280" [Yerzẹnka ḳaghaḳi yeghbarts miyuṭyan kanonadruṭyunẹ], *Banber Matenadarani*, 6 (1962), 365–377. Also see S. B. Dadoyan, *Hovḥan of Erzenka's "Views from the Writings of Islamic Philosophers" and his Philosophical Treatises in the Light of Islamic Sources*; also, "A Thirteenth Century Armenian Summary of the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity".

Hovḥannēs of Erzenka's "Constitution" is in many ways reminiscent of a similar reformist text prepared at the court of ʿAbbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-dīn Allāh in Baghdad for the Futuwwa organizations of Baghdad. Ismāʿīlī scholars were involved in these reformist projects. Hovḥannēs is also the author of a brief summary of the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* which became an inspiration for medieval Islamic brotherhood organizations. Through the books of Hovḥan which were used as textbooks, some doctrines of the Brethren found their way to Armenian philosophy. The subject of youth organizations in particular constitutes a bridge between medieval Armenian and Muslim social history. To mention an example of many points of similarity: the gathering places of the Armenian Youth organizations were called "Houses of good news", almost the equivalent of *buyūt al-daʿwa*.[116] The closest model of a community in which traces of a sectarian and communal traditions have survived was the city of Guerla in Transylvania. These Armenians were said to have been "persecuted for their religion" and "customs". It was in this purely "Armenian city" of Guerla that very elaborate brotherhoods and sisterhoods were formed. Striking similarities can be traced between the constitution of these brotherhoods and the initial text of Hovḥan of Erzenka. Their legends put their origin in Ani which they left in 1239. They moved from Crimea, to Poland and then to Moldavia. Finally, in 1672, prince Michael Abafi of Transylvania invited them to settle in his county, where they bought estates on which the city of Guerla was built. According to G. Govrikian, by the beginning of the nineteenth century these Armenians had acquired Hungarian citizenship.[117]

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[116] "Organizations of Braves" [Kẹtrijavorats kazmakerpuṭyunnerẹ], (no author stated) *Zarṭonḳ*, 12 March (1968); G. B. Aṭoyan, *The Wrestling and Military Sports in Armenia* [Ṛazma-Sborṭayin menamarterẹ Ḥayastanum], (Yerevan, 1965).

[117] Grigor V. Govrikian, *The Metropolis of the Armenians of Transylvania* [Dransilvanio ḥayots medropolisẹ kam nkaragir Kerla ḥayaḳaghaḳi], (Vienna, 1896).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARMENIAN ESTABLISHMENT IN FATIMID EGYPT: GRIGOR MARTYROPHIL AND VIZIER BAHRĀM AL-ARMANĪ

Notes on the Armenians in Pre-Fatimid Egypt

After the Council of Chalcedon in 451, Byzantine pressure to impose Chalcedonianism on all Christians of the Empire, and the anti-Chalcedonian position of the Coptic Church attracted many Armenians and Monophysitic Syrians to Egypt. Medieval Armenian sources mention an "Armenian Monastery" there, though without specifying any details.[1] Armenian students came to the School of Alexandria; between the years 406 and 415 and following the invention of the Armenian Alphabet, a first group was there; it was followed by another in 430's.[2]

Very little is known about Armenian communities in Egypt during the Roman and Byzantine periods. A Greek text in Armenian letters, known as the "Fayyum Papyrus" (date undetermined) generated several hypotheses about Armenian presence during those periods. This relic was apparently written by someone trying to learn Greek. Another Greek inscription in ancient Thebes-Luxor referred to some Armenians in Egypt. With a change in punctuation, the sentence could mean "I, Khosrov the Armenian, was astonished at what I saw", and/or "I, Khosrov, seeing Armenian(s) was astonished".[3] Either way, as evidence of the presence of Armenian communities in Roman or Byzantine Egypt, the inscription has negligible relevance. In the armies of both empires there were many Armenians and it is not at all surprising to find Armenians not only in Egypt but in the whole region. Benefiting from the transitional period from Byzantine to Islamic rule, and around 646, a military figure of Armenian origin

[1] N. Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community in Egypt*, 43–44. See the bibliography for sources on the subject, 43.

[2] Bishop Aghavnuni, "Monastic Life in Egypt" [Anapatakan keankẹ Yegiptosi mēǰ], *Taṭev Yearbook* (1929), 39–50.

[3] N. Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community in Egypt*, 47–48.

called *Gerger* (Grigor) proclaimed himself ruler over some parts of North Africa. He even issued coins that bore his name.[4] Two typical Armenian tombstones or *khachkar*s found in Cairo from the tenth century, can be taken as indications of some Armenian presence there.[5]

During the early years of the Islamic expansion in Syria and Palestine, the Byzantine army commander was an Armenian called Vaḥan, who had many compatriots among his troops. After the Byzantine defeat these Armenians fell into slavery and became part of the Islamic armies; with the other Christian military slaves they were called *rūmī*s. During the invasion of Egypt, it is estimated that about one hundred and fifty of these Armenian military slaves were part of the Islamic armies.[6]

This is the background of Wardān (*Vardan*) al-Rūmī al-Armanī who was a freedman and flag-bearer ("*ḥāmil liwā'*") of ʿAmru b. al-ʿĀṣ.[7] He became a close companion of the latter, actively participating in the battles of Alexandria (640–641) and the founding of the city of Fusṭāṭ. Through his eloquence and knowledge of Greek, this shrewd "*mawlā*" of ʿAmru saved his master from certain death when with a group of soldiers they fell into the hands of the Greeks in Alexandria.[8] Wardān is believed to have built the palace of Dār al-Neḥās in Fusṭāṭ, where there also was a market called Sūq Wardān.[9] He fell in a battle with the Byzantine armies which landed on Borolles in 673/53.[10]

Al-Amīr ʿAlī b. Yaḥyā Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Armanī was the most important figure of Armenian origin in the ʿAbbasid administration.[11] Like Wardān he was a freed mamlūk who rose in rank to be appointed twice as Governor of Egypt (in 841 for a term of two years and three months, and again briefly in 849). According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, in 853 Yaḥyā al-Armanī was sent by the caliph Mutawakkil bi'llāh to the western frontiers with Byzantium. It was during these

[4] A. Alboyajian, *The Egyptian Province of the UAR and the Armenians* [A. M. H. Yegiptosi nahangẹ yev ḥayerẹ], (Cairo, 1960), 8–9.
[5] Ibid., 15. Also see N. Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community in Egypt*, 59.
[6] Gevorg Mẹssẹrlian, *Prominent Armenians in Egypt* [Akanavor ḥayer Yegiptosi mej̄], (Cairo, 1947), 13–14.
[7] Taqiyy ed-dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawāʿiẓ wa'l-Iʿtibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa'l-Āthār*, (ed.) Sh. Aḥmad ʿAlī al-Malīgī, (Cairo, 1908), vol. II, 75.
[8] Ibid., vol. I, 264–266.
[9] Op. cit.
[10] Ibid., vol. III, 309.
[11] Ibid., vol. II, 101.

times that he was in close contact with his compatriots. The Paulicians were at the apex of their military power around their strongholds in Tephrike and Arcaous and fought against the Greeks in alliance with the Arab amīrs of Melitene, Manazkert and Tarsus. Yaḥyā al-Armanī acted as governor in various parts of Greater and Lesser Armenia. He was killed in an ambush in the region of Mayyāfāriqīn in 863.[12] It is generally assumed that it was due to Yaḥyā's influence at the ʿAbbasid court, that Mutawakkil granted Ashot Bagratuni the title of "Prince of Princes" as governor of Armenia in 860. Eventually, 457 years after the fall of the Arshakuni Dynasty (in 428) the Bagratids established the third Armenian dynasty in 885 which lasted until 1045.

Of the early years of the establishment of Fatimid rule in Egypt, Jawhar al-Rūmī is thought to have been of Armenian descent. He was a "freedman of the Fatimids", "carried various epithets such as al-Ṣaqlabī, al-Ṣiqillī, and al-Rūmī". He acted as the secretary of caliphs al-Manṣūr and al-Muʿizz, then became a general in the latter's army, hence his other epithet *al-qāʾid*.[13] In addition to him and Wardān, vizier Yānis and the two Karakūshs (or Qaraqūshs) of the Ayyūbid period were also known as *rūmīs*. In Fusṭāṭ, the Greek and Armenian mamlūks lived in a special sector called *Ḥayy al-Rūmī*. Perhaps the background of Jawhar in Sicily (whence he was brought as a slave), his career, and style in administration, led some Armenian historians to consider him of Paulician-Armenian extraction. Sicily was one of the regions where rebels and heretics were sent into exile.[14] In 648 the Emperor Constans II sent rebel Armenian troops to Syracuse in Sicily. A rebellion by Armenian soldiers against the Empress Irene in 792/3, caused the branding of thousands of them and their forced settlement in Sicily in 794.[15] Less than a century later, around 885, militant Paulician communities were active in many parts of Italy.[16]

Jawhar played an important role in the pacification of the west (in Africa); in 969 he was sent by the caliph al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (953–975) to Egypt. It was due to his diplomatic skills that the peaceful

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[12] Jamāl ed-dīn b. Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, (First vol. in Leiden, 1851–55, remaining nine in Cairo, 1929–1952), vol. II, 245, 278.

[13] Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1992), 169.

[14] E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York, 1932), 889.

[15] A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, 331–332. Also see Peter Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 14–16. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, De Boor ed., (Leipzig, 1883), 469.

[16] See J. Ivanow, *Bogomil Books and Legends*.

conquest of mainly Sunnī-Shāfiʿī and Coptic Egypt was achieved by the Fatimids.[17] Jawhar's famous "Covenant" (*ʿahd*) to the Egyptians is preserved in al-Maqrīzī's *Ittiʿāẓ*.[18] Within a few years Jawhar laid the foundations of al-Qāhira or Cairo, and the Mosque of al-Azhar. The latter "played a crucial role ... in the dissemination of Ismāʿīlī doctrines, with numerous Ismāʿīlī scholars, jurists and students constantly participating in its seminars".[19] Jawhar also ordered the construction of the church and the monastery of St. George of al-Khandaq (in the southern suburbs of modern Cairo or *Miṣr al-Qadīma*).[20] Like the Fatimids (and incidentally the Armenian sectarians), Jawhar took astrology seriously. The locations of *al-Qāhira* and al-Azhar, for example, were decided upon consultations with astrologers.[21] If Jawhar was buried in the cemetery of the Church of St. George of al-Khandaq, he must have adhered to his old faith. As a Fatimid official, however, he worked for the consolidation of Fatimid Ismāʿīlism in Ikhshīdid Egypt. He introduced Shīʿī peculiarities into the *adhān* ("Come to the excellent work"), he forbade "the black livery of the ʿAbbasids ... and instructed the *khaṭībs* to wear white vestments".[22] He succeeded in controlling the famine and epidemics in Egypt,[23] and played a key role in putting down Qarmatian resistance in Syria and extending Fatimid rule over the Hijaz.[24] But despite these achievements, on his arrival in Egypt in 974, the caliph al-Muʿizz replaced Jawhar with Ibn Killis as his vizier.[25] During the persecutions of the Christians Jawhar's family in turn was slaughtered by the caliph al-Ḥākim in 1010/1.[26]

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[17] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 171–173.

[18] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-Ḥunafā' bi-Akhbār al-A'imma al-Fāṭimiyyīn al-Khulafā'*, vol. I, (Cairo, 1948), 67–70.

[19] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 173.

[20] Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, (trans.) B. T. A. Evetts, (notes) Alfred J. Butler, (Oxford, 1969), 271.

[21] Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *The History of the Fatimid State in the Maghreb, Egypt and Syria* [Ta'rīkh al-dawla al-fāṭimiyya fi'l-Maghrib...], (Cairo, 1981), 155.

[22] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, (trans., ed.) I. ʿAbbās, (Beirut, 1968–1971), 8 vols., vol. I, 344.

[23] Stanley Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt* (London, 1968), 103–108.

[24] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 174.

[25] Ibid., 176.

[26] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vol. I, 345.

Catholicos Grigor Martyrophil-Paḥlavuni

The peculiarity of the so-called "Armenian period" in Fatimid Egypt lay in the involvement of both the Armenian establishment and the unorthodox factions there. While the visit of Catholicos Grigor *Vkayasēr* (or Martyrophil, elected in 1066) in 1075 marked the beginning of the involvement of the Armenian establishment in Fatimid Egypt, the death of vizier Bahrām in 1140 marked its end. The arrival of Badr al-Jamālī in Dumyāṭ at the end of the year 1073 was the beginning of the Muslim Armenian political career in Egypt and the assassination of the last vizier, Ruzzīk b. Ṭalā'i', in 1163 its end. Were it not for the "orthodox" interval of Bahrām's two years in office (1135–1137) and its bloody aftermath, it would have been much harder to trace the simultaneous development of two opposed levels of Armenian involvement there.

Between the final falls of Ani in 1065 and Manazkert in 1071 to the Seljuks, the representatives of the Armenian nobility, or the "Armenian world", as Kirakos of Ganžak put it, "gathered in one place and appointed Father Vaḥram to the chair of the catholicosate renaming him Grigoris. A wise and virtuous man from the city of Bǰni, he was the son of Grigor Magistros and the grand-son of Vassak the Martyr".[27] Catholicos Grigoris, better known as Grigor *Vkayasēr*, began his career with two major initiatives: the delegation of a personal representative, Bishop Petros *Islantatsi* (or Icelandic), to Crimea, Poland and Transylvania,[28] and a Mediterranean journey he made from 1070 to 1078/9.

Bishop Petros, in my opinion, was sent with a special mission to inspect locations where Paulician communities were systematically settled starting from the end of the sixth century.[29] It seems that the reason for Martyrophil's interest in the Armenians of Transylvania and Egypt was to study the possibility of drawing them back to the

[27] Kirakos of Ganžak, *History of the Armenians* [Kirakos Ganžaketsi, Ḥamaṛot patmuṭyun i srbuyn Grigorē havureṣ yur lusabanyal], (Yerevan, 1961), 95. The passage: [Apa ashkharheṣ ḥayots joghovyal i mi vayr, katsutsanen haṭoṛeṇ ḥayrapetakan ztēr Vaḥram, zor anvanetsin Grigoris, zordin Grigori Magistrosi, i ḳaghaḳēn Bęǰno, zṭoṛeṇ Vasaka Martirosi, zayr imastun yev aṛaḳini].

[28] H. Ṭurshian, "From the History of the Armenian Community in Egypt during the 11th and 12th c.s" [XI yev XII dareri yegiptaḥay gaghuṭi patmuṭyunits], *Collectanea Orientalia* [Arevelagituṭyan Joghovaẓu], II (1964), (Yerevan), 301–317, 306.

[29] For the subject of the Bogomils see J. Ivanow, Excerpts from *Bogomil Books and Legends*.

Armenian Church. As he himself was beginning his journey to Constantinople, Rome (probably) and Egypt, two Muslim Armenians were making significant progress in the region: Philaretus the heretic in Martyrophil's own homebase and a little later, another "renegade", Muslim Badr al-Jamālī in Egypt.

Martyrophil's Egyptian visit and the ordination of his nephew, as Catholicos Grigor of the Armenians of Egypt, is recorded in most medieval Arab histories of Egypt. But in Armenian history we have the following from Matthew of Edessa (in literal translation): "In the year 1075 Father Grigoris travelled to Constantinople, from there [he went] to Rome; he then came to Egypt, where he visited the monasteries of the early fathers and fulfilled his heart's desires. [There] he established his see and renovated the holy church. While in Egypt, Father Grigoris was granted great honors by the King of Egypt [i.e., caliph al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh, 1035–1094], [a treatment far] better than that of the king of the *Ḥoṛoms* [i.e., the Byzantine emperor]. At this time multitudes ["*zorḳ*"],[30] about thirty thousand people, gathered in Egypt. Father Grigoris [then] ordained his nephew [sister's son] Father Grigor as Catholicos and returned to the Armenian World where his mother was still alive".[31]

Most Arab sources, over an extended period, have estimated the number of Armenians in Fatimid Egypt at thirty thousand. According to Alishan, based on Kirakos of Ganžak's *History*, in reply to "repeated" pleas by al-Mustanṣir to establish his see (i.e., the Catholicosate of All the Armenians) in Egypt, Martyrophil replied to the caliph that he could not comply with the king's wishes and "the reason he gave was that there were no members of his own nation there, and that his office in Egypt would be vacuous". Always accord-

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[30] The word *zorḳ* ordinarily means armies, but is here used to mean "multitude" with reference to active and massive groups. In the Bible we read, "multitudes of (angels) in heaven" [amenayn zorḳ yerknits] or the "multitudes of devils" [haghagẹs zorutsẹn satanayi]. See *New Dictionary of the Haigazian Language* [Nor Baṛgirḳ Ḥaykazian Lezvi], (Yerevan, 1979), vol. I, 754.

[31] The passage: [Yev ēr ṭvakanuṭyans ḥayots 1075 yev apa zkni aysorik gnats Tēr Grigoris i Costandnupolis yev andust i Ḥṛom, yev yekyal hEgiptos. Shẹṛǰetsav ẹnd anapatsẹn amenayn aṛaǰin sẹrbots ḥartsẹn yev kataryats zamenayn p̣ap̣aḳumẹn sẹṛtin yuro, yev ḥastaṭyats zantẹn yur zaṭoṛ yev kangyal andẹn, norogyats zamenayn karg surb yekeghetsvo yev bazum p̣aṛḳ yev meẓuṭyun ẹnkalav ter Grigoris i ṭagavorēn Yegiptosi aṛavel ḳan i ṭagavorēn Ḥoṛomots. Yev bazum zorḳ joghovetsan hEgiptos ibrev yeresun hazarats yev Tēr Grigoris zkni jamanakats žeṛnadryal kaṭughikos zTēr Grigor zkurordin yur yev inkẹn yelyal gayr hashkharhẹn ḥayots, vasn zi der kendani kayr mayrẹn nora].

ing to Alishan, al-Mustanṣir promised Martyrophil to "fill the world (i.e., Egypt) with the Armenian nation, a promise that he kept and their numbers were greatly multiplied".[32] One may therefore conclude that as a result of al-Mustanṣir's promise, great waves of immigration brought thirty thousand Armenians into Egypt. Completely overlooking the powerful military presence of another Armenian Badr al-Jamālī and his Armenian troops, the testimony gives the credit to Martyrophil for finding a safe haven for thousands of Armenians, driven out of Armenia by the Greeks and fleeing before the advancing Seljuk Turks.

Whatever their background, many Armenians seem to have enrolled in Badr's private army. At the time, says G. Wiet, the defense of Egypt was entrusted to the Armenians.[33] Badr's militant Armenians were mostly the Muslim converts or the unorthodox Armenians of Syria. A community of "orthodox" Armenian immigrants grew parallel to Badr's Muslim Armenians. According to H. Ṭurshian, by the end of the eleventh century, the number of the Armenians rose to one hundred thousand.[34] The date of Martyrophil's return from Egypt coincided with the assassination of his brother Vassak, the Byzantine Duke of Antioch. Sources are silent about or unaware of this connection, as they are of the motives of Martyrophil's visit to Egypt. But the refusal of Martyrophil to return to his original see now in the state of Philaretus, revealed his deep alienation from Philaretus. He settled temporarily in Mudarras, in the kingdom of Ẓamndav.[35] Within the same year, in 1078/9, Gagik Ashotian, the last Bagratuni King, was murdered and the dynasty came to an end.[36] The only sovereign Armenian land in the region and the period was the state of Philaretus the heretic, a man despised by the Armenian Church and the aristocracy.

Since it was customary to have the Catholicosate in the midst of the nation, and to give himself the status of a national leader,

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[32] Ghevond Alishan, *Hayapatum* (Venice, 1901), 351. The passages: [Hognaki khosaktsuṭyamb . . . dnēr yev ayl patjaṛẹs bani haghags voch linelo and hazgēn ḥayots unayn zhovvelẹn yur . . . isk na barnayr zpatjaṛẹs yev yerdmamb hastatel lenul zashkharhẹn ḥayastanyayts azgoḳ, zor yev arar isk, yev bazmatsuyts and bazmuṭyun huyj]. Also see Kirakos of Ganžak, *History*, 96–98.

[33] Gaston Wiet, *L'Egypte Musulmane de la Conquête Arabe à la Conquête Ottomane*, see "Precis de l'Histoire d'Egypte" (Cairo, 1932), 173.

[34] See H. Ṭurshian, "From the History of the Armenian Community in Egypt".

[35] Ibid., 308.

[36] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 265.

Philaretus asked the return of Martyrophil; but the latter "was terrified of the evil-spirited beast",[37] and was well aware of the "evil ways of Philaretus", as Matthew explained.[38] In addition, Philaretus was an associate of the Muslims, and for a while he was the protégé of the Seljuks.[39] Furthermore, he had officially converted to Islam.[40]

This apparently ordinary dispute between the establishment and an heretical dissident, became a turning point in the history of the Armenian Church. According to M. Ormanian, Martyrophil was an "involuntary Catholicos".[41] Indeed, when he found himself too afraid to face a powerful figure like Philaretus, he allowed the appointment of another catholicos, thus dividing the chair and creating a precedent. He recommended a certain Father Sargis from the city of Ḥon near Germanica and through his own consent and blessing a new catholicosate was created there.[42] A few years later, that is, during the first years of 1080's, there were at least four catholicoi. At a later period, two more were added. According to Ormanian, in Armenia proper and outside, there were eight patriarchs who claimed to be catholicoi and as such, acted independently.[43] Samuel of Ani put the division of the catholicosate in the year 1082.[44] Matthew in turn complained about the disintegration of this one remaining national institution. In 1086 there were six catholicoi, he said, four in Armenia and two others in Egypt.[45] Each one of these catholicoi functioned independent of the other; "this was cause for great mourning over the Lord's Church, because when in the single barn shepherdhood divided into four, the wolves became the guardians of Christ's lambs".[46]

Two aspects of the history of the Armenian church during this period were significant. First, the cause of the division of the chair,

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[37] Ibid., 252. The passage: [zarḥuryal i charashunj gazanēn].
[38] Ibid., 249. The passage: [gitak ēr char barutsẹn P̣ilartosin].
[39] M. Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, vol. II, 1297.
[40] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 282. The passage: [Yeghev uratsogh Ḳristosi . . . karzēr aynu p̣aṛavoril i parsits, zor voch p̣aṛavoretsav].
[41] M. Ormanian, *Azgapaum*, vol. II, 1297.
[42] Ibid., 1297–1298.
[43] Ibid., 1311.
[44] Samuel of Ani, *Collections from the Writings of Historians* [Samuel Ḳaḥanayi Anetsvo, havaḳmunḳ grots patmagrats], (Vagharshapat, 1893), 118.
[45] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 231. The passage: [Haysẹm jamanaki yeghev azgis ḥayots kaṭughikos vets, yerku hEgiptos, yev chors hamenayn ashkharhẹs ḥayots].
[46] Ibid., 229–230. The passage: [Yev ēr ays amenayn sug meẓ i vera yekeghetsvuyn Astuẓo, vasẹn zi mi parakhẹn vochkharats ẹnd chors hotapetutyunẹs bajanetsav, yev gaylḳ yeghen pahapanḳ hotin Ḳristosi].

because of the refusal or the reluctance of Martyrophil, the only representative of the Armenian establishment, to come to terms with heretical Philaretus; the second was again the failure of another representative, Patriarch Grigor, to maintain his position in Egypt because of the powerful presence of non-orthodox factions there. Grigor stayed in office from 1075 to 1117, but soon after his ordination, the community was divided between him and another anonymous catholicos. In 1095 a certain Archbishop Anastas is mentioned as catholicos, whose name is not found in the official documents.[47] The last Catholicos was the anonymous and notorious Patriarch of Itfih, who managed to be elected or appointed after the death of Anania[48] and to maintain his position for more than thirty-five years. He left Egypt to settle in Jerusalem only after the fall of the Fatimids.

On the political level, Martyrophil took a very important step that initiated a basic turn of events in Egypt. After his return from Egypt, and the division of the chair of the catholicosate, he gathered together the members of the Pahlavuni House, who had withdrawn to Sassun. Ṭurshian assumes that this meeting must have taken place in 1090. Based on a reference by Nersēs Shnorḥali, Ṭurshian believes that Martyrophil sent a force of about twenty thousand to Egypt under the command of his nephews, i.e., his sister's sons. The first of these was Vassak (or Bassak), the second is an anonymous prince whom he "renamed" as Vaḥram (his own secular name). The third of his sister's sons was the Patriarch Grigor of Egypt, the fourth was Shnorḥali's father, Prince Apirat.[49]

Thus, in addition to establishing a see in Egypt (still functioning today), Martyrophil sent an army there to support, and perhaps to balance and control the Muslim Armenian presence there. The exact date of the arrival of this force is not clear. Medieval Armenian sources are silent about the whole episode. The only clue is found in a poem by Catholicos Nersēs Shnorḥali, where the objectives and actors of this Egyptian expedition are made explicit. Shnorḥali's poem presented the two brothers, i.e., his two uncles, as spiritual children of Martyrophil. It is by the latter's deliberation and blessing, said

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[47] Artashēs Gardashian, *Data for the History of the Armenians in Egypt* [Nūṭer Yegiptosi ḥayots patmuṭyan ḥamar], (Cairo, 1943), 175; also see, N. Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Egyptian community*, 85–88.

[48] About Anania's murder with other clergymen see Gh. Alishan, *Shnorḥali and his Times*, 165.

[49] H. Ṭurshian, "From the History of the Armenian Community in Egypt", 308.

Nersēs, that the two brothers, Vaḥram and Vassak "waged wars against (some) races/factions and reigned as conquerors over the land of their opponents", that is, Egypt.[50]

Paḥlavuni Prince, Vizier Bahrām al-Armanī and Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ

The birthplace of Vaḥram was Tall Bāshir[51] situated on the plains that extend between the Taurus mountains and the Euphrates, on the river Sajur, northeast of Aleppo. After the Seljuk occupation of much of Cappadocia these areas were filled with Armenian immigrants.[52] During Martyrophil's visit to Egypt between 1075 and 1078/9, Tall Bāshir was within the state of Philaretus, and obviously Vaḥram was not welcome there. Ibn Muyassar's version of the circumstances that drove Vaḥram from his native town is as follows (in translation): "He who ruled the Armenians died and Bahrām was the worthiest to take his place, but a group of Armenians united against him, . . . and appointed another person; (consequently) Bahrām left Tall Bāshir angered and came to Cairo".[53] Ibn Muyassar seems to believe that Bahrām's appointment to the vizierate followed these events, after a brief interval during the 1130's. At that time Tall Bāshir was under Crusader control, and it is surprising to find Bahrām ousted since he was on good terms with them. The ambiguity in Ibn Muyassar's report can be explained by a passage in the famous letter of caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ to King Roger II of Sicily (after the overthrow of Bahrām in 1137); this letter and three other decrees issued by the caliph constitute the source of most of what we know about Bahrām. They

[50] The poem is cited in Ghevond Alishan's Introduction to the concise Armenian edition of Abū Ṣāliḥ's *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*: Abū Saḥl the Armenian, *History of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* [Abu Sahl Ḥay, Patmuṭyun yekeghyats yev vanoreits Yegiptosi], (Venice, St. Lazar, 1933), 44. The passage from the poem by Shnorḥali where the latter refers to his ancestors: [And i haṭoṛēn surb/ Zar i ḳeṛēn vordi ẓẹnyal/ ZGrigorios ḥamanvanyal/. . ./ Vor Hovsepa meẓin nmanyal/ Zhamazgis zkni z̄gyal/ Zari yeghbaṛẹs yur ḳaǰatsyal / Ẹst Hesova zoravaryal / Voro Vaḥram veraz̄aynyal/ Musuyn Vasak anvanadẹryal/ Vorḳ vehaguyn paṛẹs enkalyal/ Yev meẓargi patvo ḥasyal/ Zpaterazm azants vanyal / Ḥakaṛakats haghṭogh gẹtyal/ Vasn aysorik shẹḳeghatsyal/ Yev ashkharhi notsunts tiryal].

[51] Or Turbessel in the chronicles of the Crusaders and "*Hill of good news*" in medieval Armenian literature: *Avetyats Blur.*

[52] Marius Canard, "Un Vizir Chrétien à l'Époque Fatimide" *Miscellania Orientalia* (London, 1973), 88.

[53] Ibn Muyassar (Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf b. Jalab), *Akhbār Miṣr*, (ed.) M. Henri Masse (Cairo, 1919), vol. II, 78.

are preserved in al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā* (and in their greater part included in Appendix IV).[54]

In response to Roger II's mediation in the liberation of Bahrām, al-Ḥāfiẓ reminded the latter that Bahrām arrived in his kingdom as a fugitive "banned from his homeland, rejected by his country and people, with no money, position, family and men" (or troops). Through the "benevolence" of the caliph, he rose from this condition to the highest position of the vizierate.[55] Al-Ḥāfiẓ did not specify the time of Bahrām's initial arrival. The reference cannot be to his first arrival at the head of an army of twenty thousand Armenians from Sassun and Khuṭ; between the first arrival in the last decade of the eleventh century, and the second appearance in Egypt as a "poor fugitive", there is a very obscure interval of over thirty years, which all sources, both Armenian and Arab, have failed to notice.

However, the reference to Bahrām as "le seigneur Vaḥram" or "le seigneur des Armeniens", throws some light on Vaḥram's whereabouts before his appearance in Egypt. In the year 1098 Bahrām was in ʿAkkā; Guillaume of Tyr reports that he was saved by a "divine miracle" when the infidels besieged the town.[56] After leaving Tall Bāshir, he was in the south at the head of an Armenian force and was involved in the Frankish-Seljukid conflict. His career in Syria and Palestine explains why many Arab sources refer to him as "*muqaddam al-arman*",[57] a phrase not too different from the French "seigneur des Armeniens".

The letters of al-Ḥāfiẓ constituted the source of most historians: "When Bahrām established himself in the vizierate", says Ibn Muyassar obviously based on these documents, "he asked al-Ḥāfiẓ to be given permission to invite his brothers and family (*jamāʿatuhu*) to come to Egypt, and he was allowed to do so. He brought them from Tall Bāshir and the land of the Armenians until their number in Egypt

[54] Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā fī Ṣināʿat al-Inshā* (Cairo, 1913–1917). These letters are in the following order: The letter to Roger II of Sicily: vol. VI, 458–463; The three decrees related to the release and departure of Bahrām's relatives and Armenian soldiers: vol. VIII, 260–262, vol. XIII, 325, 326. An Armenian translation of these documents is made by G. Messerlian, *Prominent Armenians in Egypt*, 75–84.

[55] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, vol. VI, 460.

[56] Gaston Wiet, *Grandeur de l'Islam* (Mayenne, 1961), 180. The source is R. Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume Franc de Jérusalem* in 3 vols., vol. I, 161.

[57] M. Canard, "Un Vizir Chrétien à l'Époque Fatimide", 93.

reached thirty thousand; they trespassed the rights of the Muslims and subjected them to great injustice".[58]

Ibn Muyassar suggested that these thirty thousand Armenians immigrated after 1135. Matthew's estimate of thirty thousand Armenians and Ibn Muyassar's report of about thirty thousand new arrivals can be seen as referring to the same group of pro-establishment Armenians, but there is no way of confirming this. Ibn Muyassar was, however, confused about the time of their arrival and related them directly to Bahrām, while Matthew's story clearly suggests Martyrophil as the central figure in causing this great exodus many decades earlier. But whatever their number, up to the vizierate of Bahrām in 1135, no friction or injustice by any side was ever reported in Egypt between the Armenians and the local Muslims.

The sharp contrast in conduct and mentality between the associates of Bahrām and the other Armenians in all positions, justifies the remark of al-Ḥāfiẓ about the "devilish" plans that Bahrām was involved in and that these later arrivals were part of that conspiracy. Canard was one of the few historians who noticed a discrepancy in dates and reports and stated without further elaboration that "obscure events" must have followed the death of Philaretus (that he puts six years later in 1092) and preceded the arrival of Bahrām in Egypt, events about which little is known.[59] Al-Ḥāfiẓ made no reference to the events in the north. After Bahrām was granted everything he asked for, he said, he had a "demonic idea" the "signs and indications of which were disclosed to us. He called upon his family, his clan and his kind, he corresponded with them through secret messages and in Armenian letters, which were discovered. Those whom Bahrām contacted started arriving gradually until their number reached twenty thousand; some of them were mounted, others not, and among them, there were the two sons of his brother.[60] Obviously, twenty thousand armed men from Sassun where the Paḥlavunis were established, could not have arrived in Egypt on such short notice and in such a short time. There is a strong possibility that most of these men were already in the area since Bahrām's initial arrival and only a small number of relatives and closer associates came to his assistance after his vizierate. At any rate, earlier on Bahrām must have been at the head of some

[58] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 79.
[59] M. Canard, "Un Vizir Chrétien à l'Époque Fatimide", 89.
[60] The Letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Roger II, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, 461.

force to be referred to as "*muqaddam al-arman*" by Ibn al-Qalānisī[61] and others.

Michael the Syrian, describes the whole episode of Bahrām as follows: "There were in Egypt many Armenians who had arrived there after expanding in Cilicia and Syria, when Emperor Basil gave them Cappadocia in exchange for Armenia. They multiplied in Egypt, had a catholicos and bishops. The Catholicos had a brother called Bahrām and it was this Bahrām who became the chief (or leader) of the Armenians".[62] The passage referred to events of the later decades of the eleventh century and not to Bahrām's vizierate much later. When early in the year 1135 Prince Ḥasan, one of the sons of al-Ḥāfiẓ, asked Bahrām to intervene from al-Gharbiyya, he entered Cairo with his private army to put an end to the clashes between the Ghuzz and the Juyūshiyya troops.

According to Canard, this force was the Armenian army which Bahrām led to Egypt[63] and to which both Shnorḥali and Michael the Syrian referred. Moreover, he considered Bahrām's success a victory not for the Fatimid monarchy but another "victoire arménienne",[64] apparently similar to that of Badr al-Jamālī in 1074, and Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk in 1054. Canard seems not to have perceived major differences between these "Armenian victories". While Badr's Armenians brought peace to Egypt and extended the life of a terminally decaying dynasty, Bahrām's victory instigated unprecedented violence between the Armenians and the Muslims. The latter, that is, the "Muslims" about whom al-Ḥāfiẓ spoke, possibly included the Muslim Armenians in pursuit of whom Bahrām was sent to Egypt in the first place.

There is another detail that should not escape notice: when Martyrophil arrived in Egypt there was an Armenian community there but when asked by the caliph al-Mustanṣir to establish his see in Cairo, he found "no community" there, totally ignoring Badr's Armenians. It would appear that the latter were not to his liking and the ordination of a Paḥlavuni prince as catholicos was an insurance for future immigrants into Egypt. Furthermore, there must have been an Armenian church of some sort that needed "renovation".[65]

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[61] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, 26.
[62] Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, vol. III, 240.
[63] M. Canard, "Un Vizir Chrétien à l'Époque Fatimide", 94.
[64] Ibid., 95.
[65] G. Alishan, *Hayapatum*, 351.

If by the time of Bahrām's vizierate, there were about thirty Armenian churches and monasteries in Cairo and major cities, as estimated by the historian Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian, why would the followers and associates of Bahrām build "a church in every street" and try to change Egypt's Muslim character, as caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ said in his first reply to Bahrām's plea from al-Shām?[66] Surely Bahrām's men were not making the absurd attempt to convert the predominantly Sunnī Muslims of Egypt into Armenian Apostolic Christianity. The so-called "Muslims" and specifically the "soldiers"[67] that revolted at Bahrām's "crusade", in my opinion, included the Muslim Armenians of Badr's cultural and political background. The opportunity was taken by other Muslims dissatisfied with both Bahrām and especially al-Ḥāfiẓ himself. Events proved that Ibn Walakhshī, the Sunnī figure who led the mob, had plans of his own.

In his letter to Roger II of Sicily, al-Ḥāfiẓ wrote that public opposition formed a homogeneous front and that "Bahrām and his associates (or followers) appeared as a stain on a clear surface, and as a drop in the waters of the ocean".[68] The remark, in my opinion, referred specifically to Bahrām's partisans and not to all the Armenians of Egypt. Indeed, during the anti-Armenian atrocities, the desecration of the grave of Bahrām's brother, Catholicos Grigor, and the murder of his brother Bassak the governor of Qūṣ showed that Bahrām's immediate family was targeted. Otherwise, unless there was a history of conflict between some of the so-called "Muslims" and the Paḥlavunis in particular, I find it highly improbable that local Muslims would go so far in their hatred as to assault the grave of a bishop who died over twenty years earlier.

The period of ten years between the assassination of the caliph al-Āmir and that of Bahrām saw a series of violent events: the disappearance of al-Āmir's son al-Ṭayyib, the division in the Musta'lī Ismā'īlīs into Ḥāfiẓīs and Ṭayyibīs, the murder of two Muslim Armenian viziers by al-Ḥāfiẓ (Kutayfāt and Yānis), the death of two of al-Ḥāfiẓ's sons (Sulaymān and Ḥasan), revolts in the army and clashes between opposite factions. After the liquidation of Kutayfāt b. al-Afḍal (1131) and then vizier Yānis al-Armanī (1132), the caliph tried to manage without a vizier, because the prospect of powerful viziers

[66] First Decree of al-Ḥāfiẓ, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, vol. VIII, 261.
[67] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, vol. VI, "Letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Roger II, 461.
[68] Ibid., 461.

for a monarch in his condition was fraught with danger. He then appointed his eldest son Sulaymān as heir and vizier. After the premature death of the latter, Ḥaydara, another son was appointed. But the jealousy of a third son Ḥasan and rivalries between a faction of the Juyūshī forces loyal to him and Rayḥāniyya troops loyal to Ḥaydara, led to the massacre of a great number of amīrs associated with al-Ḥāfiẓ. "Irritated by Ḥasan's behaviour, the army . . . revolted and demanded his head. Al-Ḥāfiẓ was obliged to comply, and had Ḥasan poisoned by his physician". Bahrām, invited by Ḥasan, reached Cairo with his private force a little too late.[69]

However, he emerged as the strongest force on the ground. "The next step was inevitable; Bahrām was nominated as vizier. Al-Ḥāfiẓ's remarkable adaptability proved itself once again".[70] Al-Ḥāfiẓ tried to keep this Christian Vizier of the Sword of Islam and of the Pen by modifying some customs, like appearing on the Friday pulpit accompanied with the chief Qāḍī, and personally taking over the management of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*, as was the custom, before Badr al-Jamālī who changed them in his favour.[71] But the commonly held view that the appointment of a Christian vizier triggered the popular uprising against Bahrām, has no foundation. The objectives of Bahrām and his manner of dealing with the affairs of the vizierate were directly responsible for the events that followed.

Ibn Muyassar put the episode in a religious-cultural context. In his opinion, dissension against Bahrām and his people was caused by their initiative to fill Cairo with churches and monasteries and their attempt to change the faith of the people. "Every leader of his compatriots had a church for himself. The people of Egypt were afraid that these people might change the creed of the Muslims and the complaints multiplied".[72] The Muslim theologians found no obstacles to the appointment of a Christian executive vizier (*wazīr al-tanfīdh*) but refused to accept a Christian as vizier who was delegate on behalf of the caliph-imām (*wazīr al-tafwīḍ*). There seems to have been no objection to the creed of the vizier as long as the range of his duties was strictly administrative and secular. But, "Bahrām fanatically adhered to his Armenian origin" and restricted his confidence only

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[69] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 269.
[70] Y. Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt* (Leiden, 1991), 59.
[71] Ibid., 60.
[72] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 79.

to his kind.[73] It was his blunt imposition of his clan upon the administration and the public that triggered anti-Armenian acts from 1137 to 1140. It has been suggested that the episode was an "anti-Christian spasm" as a consequence of the rivalry between Bahrām and the Sunnī governor of al-Gharbiyya, Riḍwān b. Walakhshī. "Mocking al-Ḥāfiẓ's attempts to legitimize his claim to the imamate", says Y. Lev, he even sought to raise one of the sons of the caliph to the throne. But the chief *dā'ī* "expounded the standard Ismā'īlī doctrine that one of the necessary attributes of an *imām* is the designation (*naṣṣ*) conferred upon the future *imām* by the *imām*-father".[74] When sent away to Ascalon by Bahrām, Riḍwān found the opportunity to prevent Armenians who travelled by sea from entering Egypt, allegedly upon Bahrām's invitation. In his letter to Roger II, al-Ḥāfiẓ mentioned these measures for which the citizens of Egypt, he said, expressed their gratitude to Riḍwān.[75]

Riḍwān may have had his own plans but events proved that his hatred of Bahrām became the most efficient weapon in the hands of al-Ḥāfiẓ to get rid of his third Armenian vizier after the death of al-Āmir. Being a middle-aged man at the time of his term in office, the caliph was well aware of the danger of accommodating dictatorial viziers in the administration. Popular disenchantment with Bahrām's conspicuously anti-Muslim policies granted al-Ḥāfiẓ the proper opportunity to incite the army and populace to depose him. From the start, being a Christian, Bahrām was in an unfavourable position, and al-Ḥāfiẓ knew well that this was a weakness he could exploit at any time whenever he felt that the powers of the vizier threatened his precarious condition as regent rather than heir to the throne. His imāmate was rejected by the Nizārīs anyway, and half the Musta'lians, who adhered to al-Āmir's son al-Ṭayyib (in whose disappearance he is assumed to have played a role).

Personally al-Ḥāfiẓ did not seem to entertain anti-Christian feelings and the contrary could be shown to be true. Between the years 1130 and 1136, four decrees were issued by the Fatimid court on behalf of the monks of Mount Sinai. The first of these was issued by al-Ḥāfiẓ when he was acting as regent with Abū 'Alī Kutayfāt as his

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[73] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 432.

[74] Y. Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, 61.

[75] al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, vol. VI, "The Letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Roger II", 462.

vizier.[76] The second was by al-Ḥāfiẓ himself, for he had no vizier in 1134.[77] The third and the fourth (1135, 1136) were issued during Bahrām's term in office and the first of these was issued in the name of the vizier and not the caliph, as was customary.[78] It stated that "The vizier Bahrām orders the military governor of al-Ṭūr and the other officials to leave alone the grain and fruit belonging to the monks of Mount Sinai".[79] The decree was in response to a petition by the monks complaining about harassment to which they were subjected. It was issued on the third day of Rajab of the year 529, about three weeks after Bahrām's appointment. In the decree Bahrām's titles were: "Most Excellent Lord, Commander of the Armies, Sword of Islam, Helper of the Imām, Succour of Mankind, Abu'l-Muẓaffar Bahrām al-Ḥāfiẓī".[80] (These titles were granted, as Stern assumes, to al-Ẓāfir's viziers, Ibn Maṣāl and al-ʿĀdil b. Sallār, and to vizier al-ʿAbbās as well. Ibn Walakhshī was given additional titles: "*khalīl quḍāt al-muslimīn wa-hādī duʿāt al-muʾminīn*" (i.e., "helper of the judges of the Muslims and leader of the missionaries of the faithful").[81]

In severe style the decree threatened: "Those who dare" to continue harassing the monks and their property, "after the present expression of our displeasure, will meet punishment which will teach them better and which will be example for others. Let all the amīrs, the governors . . . and the officials who read this, or to whom this is read, take cognizance of this order and act accordingly, and beware of contravening or transgressing".[82] The next decree to the monks followed the regular procedure: the caliph issuing the order to the vizier who in turn transmitted it through the proper channels.[83]

Another indication of the tolerance of al-Ḥāfiẓ towards the Christians was his friendship with the anonymous Armenian Patriarch of Itfih. After the assassination of the Patriarch Anania of the Armenians (during the anti-Armenian events following Bahrām's deposition), Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian said that this bishop managed to

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[76] S. M. Stern, *Fatimid Decrees* (London, 1964), 35–45.
[77] Ibid., 46–52.
[78] Ibid., 53–58.
[79] Ibid., 53.
[80] Ibid., 55. The titles as they appear in the decree: "*al-sayyid al-ajall amīr al-juyūsh sayf al-Islām nāṣir al-imām ghiyāth al-anām abī al-muẓaffar Bahrām al-Ḥāfiẓī*".
[81] S. M. Stern, *Fatimid Decrees*, 64.
[82] Op. cit. The passage.
[83] Ibid., 63.

become patriarch "by means of money which he gave in bribes".[84] This Patriarch arranged some kind of understanding with al-Ḥāfiẓ: he was to give the caliph instruction during the two weekly visits he made to the Emerald Palace.[85] He also appeared on festivals to pay his respects and to report to al-Ḥāfiẓ the results of his researches in biographies, histories of wars, chronicles and annals of former rulers. These lectures continued until the death of al-Ḥāfiẓ in 1149/544. Abū Ṣāliḥ praises the patriarch's character, culture and physical beauty.[86] In 1172, the Patriarch of Itfih left Egypt carrying what he could of the church treasures.[87] He established a monastery and a church dedicated to St. Sargis just outside Jerusalem, where he spent the rest of his life.[88] A whole section between folios 3b and 4b, where the biography of the Patriarch is supposed to continue, and where there is the account of an incident that involved Bahrām's niece (Vassak's daughter) is omitted in Evett's edition of Abū Ṣāliḥ's *Churches*.[89] Medieval Armenian historians have no knowledge of this peculiar figure who not only managed to survive the anti-Armenian atrocities but became a patriarch. If he was a regular member of the Armenian Apostolic Church, he needed no irregular measures like bribery; in addition, he would have been known as "catholicos" like the other bishops appointed by the Church and not "patriarch". The speed with which he replaced the murdered Catholicos Anania (d. 1137)—an associate of Bahrām—in extremely dangerous circumstances, point to a man of extraordinary background and means. He was accused of "immoral conduct" but was acquitted after a physical handicap was established by a court physician.[90] These accusations may have had grounds, but either way, they reveal little about this obscure figure. Irregularities in his background and career are also suggested by the manner in which he built a monastery and a church for his men outside Jerusalem and his conflict with the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem—who eventually killed him by poisoning.[91]

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[84] Ibid., 64.
[85] Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, fol. 2b, 4.
[86] Ibid., fol. 2b, 4–5.
[87] Ibid., fol. 3b, 7.
[88] Ibid., fol. 2b, 5.
[89] About this story see the translation of the missing page in N. Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community in Egypt*, 91–95.
[90] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, f. 3b, 7.
[91] Ibid., f. 3b, 6–7.

The intervention of King Roger of Sicily in favor of Bahrām can be traced, as Canard maintains, to "raisons politiques plus profondes".[92] Some of these "reasons" were the interests of the administration of al-Ḥāfiẓ in maintaining good relations with the Kingdom of Sicily that had a large fleet in the Mediterranean. Other reasons were the plans of Roger II in coordination with the pro-Crusader Armenian establishment in north Syria. For both sides, Bahrām's role and case had instrumental value.

At the time when Bahrām and his Armenians were powerful in Egypt, Roger was hoping to annex the principality of Antioch to the Kingdom of Sicily. It is possible that he was in contact and correspondence with Bahrām for the support of the Armenian aristocracies to support his plans in the area. In general, Bahrām acted in favour of the Crusaders in the Fatimid court. It was due to his intervention that a captive knight was released from prison in Egypt. It is believed that the latter was Geoffrey of Esch, a native of the vicinity of Maestricht, related to Godefrey of Bouillon and brother of Henry of Esch. He was captured around 1103–1104 with three hundred of his men and was still in prison in 1135. When the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem visited Egypt, the Syrian Jacobites asked him to seek the liberation of the prisoners. In Egypt where "the Armenians were powerful", the "leader" (*chief*) of the Armenians, Bahrām, was only too happy to oblige, and indeed al-Ḥāfiẓ issued an order for the release of the prisoners.[93]

Canard suggests that Roger II needed the support of the Armenians of Egypt, probably Bahrām's followers, for his future projects in north Syria.[94] The caliph had good reason to suspect Bahrām's involvement in the Frankish plans. He bluntly justified his role in inviting a Sunnī fanatic, Riḍwān b. Walakhshī, and supported him in inciting the mob and the army against Bahrām. However, in the same letter he informed Roger II that Bahrām was already granted royal pardon and insurances for his life and property in Egypt.

In addition to Roger's letter and the reply to it, three more letters by al-Ḥāfiẓ and at least two letters by Bahrām (to which we have

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[92] M. Canard, "Une Lettre du Calife Fatimide al-Ḥāfiẓ (524–544/1130–1149) à Roger II", *Miscellania Orientalia*, Ch. VII, 141.

[93] The source that Abbé Martin uses for this incident is a manuscript of the Syrian Jacobite Church dated 1138. See Abbé Martin, *Les premiers croisés et les syriens jacobites de Jérusalem*, JA, 8e serie (1888) 474.

[94] M. Canard, "Un Vizir Chrétien à l'Époque Fatimide", 113.

references only by al-Ḥāfiẓ), constitute the file of the correspondence on the affair of Bahrām. The first letter was written by Bahrām after the "revolt" of Riḍwān and his escape to al-Shām or Syria. Al-Qalqashandī adds the epithet "*al-naṣrānī*" (the Christian) to Bahrām's name and presents Riḍwān as the defender of Islam and a reformer who took upon himself the rectification of an essential error in trusting a "*naṣrānī*" with a key position in the Muslim community or "*ahl 'l-millah*". Fleeing before Riḍwān, he relates, and avoiding the latter's rule, Bahrām went to al-Shām, and from there he wrote to al-Ḥāfiẓ asking permission for his Armenian associates who were with him among the army in Egypt, to leave. Cunningly and deceitfully, continues al-Qalqashandī, Bahrām took on the appearance of having repented for his disloyalty and demonstrated obedience to the caliph; he claimed to have a wish to withdraw from the world and to retire into some monastery in order to devote himself to worship.[95]

The first letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ was a reply to this plea. The caliph expressed satisfaction at Bahrām's expressions of loyalty and support for his master and in turn reconfirmed his initial commitments to him (that Bahrām must have reminded him of) to safeguard his security. But, added the "*amīr al-muslimīn*", his sincere desire to maintain this positive attitude towards Bahrām, was made impossible by a massive uprising by "all the Muslims" after the afflictions they were subjected to and the wrongdoings that could neither be forgiven nor overlooked. After washing his hands of the consequences of this uprising, al-Ḥāfiẓ found the release of Bahrām's men at the royal palace "impossible" under the circumstances, clearly implying that he had to follow the tide of social unrest against Bahrām and his men.[96] However, in compliance with Bahrām's desire to return, the caliph proposed two alternatives: the first was to remain in public service and be given a choice between the governorships of Qūṣ, or Ikhmīm (Akhmīm) and Asyūṭ, on condition of keeping only a private guard of fifty or sixty cavalrymen. The other alternative was to withdraw into a monastery of Bahrām's choice and be given the ownership of both the monastery and the area of its location.[97] If both alternatives failed to meet Bahrām's approval, al-Ḥāfiẓ warned him of terrible consequences that would inevitably follow, because, as he

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[95] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, vol. VIII, 261.
[96] Op. cit.
[97] Ibid., 262.

said, what all the Muslims intend and will do "is a religious action that no secular force can delay or prevent". The caliph concluded by urging Bahrām to reflect upon the matter and to inform him of his decision.[98]

While in Syria, Bahrām contacted Roger II, whose letter of mediation followed his. The second and third letters of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Bahrām marked a sharp departure from the first. They were essentially letters of insurance and/or safety (*amān*) granted to Bahrām and to his relatives and compatriots. In the second letter three names were mentioned in particular, *Basīl* and *Ẓarqa* (or Vassil and Shaḥan) and Vaḥram, the son of their brother. These were Bahrām's assistants, as the caliph indicated. They were given assurances by the caliph to remain in Egypt as before or depart to their native land, should they wish to do so.[99]

Bahrām returned upon these guarantees provided by the caliph. The letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Roger II must have been written immediately after Bahrām's return to Egypt because al-Ḥāfiẓ ended his letter by mentioning letters of insurance granted to Bahrām and the latter's return to Egypt.[100] But dramatic events followed his return. There is no information about Bahrām's choice of alternatives, but he seems to have returned with a resolution and preparation for a military encounter with his opponents. Riḍwān besieged the capital and when faced with Bahrām's men, his soldiers raised pages of the Qur'ān on their spears. The Muslims in Bahrām's army joined the enemy camp. The caliph advised Bahrām to leave for Qūṣ where his brother Bassak was the governor. According to Ibn Muyassar, Riḍwān entered Cairo as soon as Bahrām left and was immediately proclaimed vizier with an additional title *al-Mālik al-Afḍal.*[101] But Riḍwān's term in office (1137–1139) was riddled by constant conflict with the caliph and ended in his imprisonment.

When Bahrām arrived in Qūṣ with his Armenian troops, or what was left of them, he found his brother's body mutilated, tied to a dog's cadavre and thrown on a garbage pile. Meanwhile, in Cairo the grave of his other brother, the Catholicos Grigor, in the Church of al-Zuhrī, was desecrated. The Catholicos Anania along with other

[98] Op. cit.
[99] Ibid., vol. XIII, 325–326.
[100] Ibid., vol. VI, 463.
[101] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 80.

priests and civilians were massacred, churches and houses of Armenians in the Ḥusayniyya district of Cairo were pillaged and burnt. In Qūṣ Bahrām retaliated violently; with his men he then fled to the White Monastery near Aswān. Riḍwān's forces besieged them and after negotiations Bahrām's men were allowed to leave for Cairo and then to their country.

Several versions are available about the time Bahrām spent at the White Monastery and his return to Cairo as unofficial consultant of al-Ḥāfiẓ at the palace, where he died in 1140. Al-Ḥāfiẓ, one of the most enigmatic figures in Fatimid history, declared three days of official mourning and led the funeral procession in tears. Bahrām was buried in the Monastery of al-Khandaq.[102] The death of Bahrām brought the involvement of the Armenian establishment in Fatimid Egypt to a dramatic end. Between the end of hostilities in 1140 and the year 1186 (when four Armenian priests were sent by King Leon II of Cilicia to reclaim the churches of al-Zuhrī and al-Bustān), we hear of no official Armenian figures visiting Egypt.[103] These two churches and the monasteries of al-Khandaq and al-Abyaḍ (or the White Monastery) in particular belonged to the Armenian community, according to a list prepared by N. Tēr Miḳaelian that includes thirty Armenian churches in Egypt during the so-called Armenian period there.[104]

The study of the history of the Armenian churches will undoubtedly contribute to the study of the distribution of Armenians and their number in Egypt. In addition to Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian, Abu'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Shabushtī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Khālidī, Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahānī, Sa'īd b. al-Biṭrīq, al-Maqrīzī, Severus Bishop of Ushmunayn and others have written on the subject of the Christian churches and monasteries.[105] Fragmentary information is also found in biographies of patriarchs and monks. Abū Ṣāliḥ says that he made use of previous sources, without stating them. The originality of Abū Ṣāliḥ's *Churches* is questionable as are many elements related to his personality, but his Armenian nationality seems to be accepted by most scholars. His eye-witness accounts, however, are of great value despite the fact that the book is basically a collection of

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[102] Ibid., 84. The passage.
[103] N. Tēr Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community in Egypt*, 100–101.
[104] Ibid., 102–110.
[105] The Introduction to Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, xiv–xv.

notes summarized by the scribe whose accuracy leaves a lot to be desired. The introductory section of this work would have been very interesting for our study, since it was devoted to the Armenians, but the first twenty-two pages became separated from the manuscript and the section is therefore incomplete. Obviously many of the so-called Armenian churches initially belonged to the Copts, but were then transferred to the Armenians, who often renovated and expanded them. After the persecutions of the Armenians by the Kurds and the Ghuzz of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn, and then by the Mamlūks, the Armenian community shrank drastically and the churches were left to the Copts. At present it is very common to find typical Armenian motives, architectural styles, bell-towers, domes, icons, manuscripts and inscriptions in the Coptic churches and monasteries of Egypt.

A completely neglected detail in this broad and poorly researched field, imposes itself as one of the rare missing links in the vital connection that existed between the Armenians of the Euphrates and those of Egypt during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is a group of three inscriptions on the fresco over the main altar of the sanctuary of the White Monastery. The White Monastery is one of two monasteries situated in the south west of the city of Suhaj (or Sohag) in the province of Asyūṭ not far from Akhmīm. The other one was known as the Red Monastery for its red brick structure while the white stones of the first gave it its name. The frescos of the great church of the White Monastery are in relatively good condition.[106] A. Gartashian, who visited the monastery, has a detailed description of this fresco.[107] Both he and Butler note that the fresco is found in good condition because its plaster base belongs to a much more recent period than that of the wall and the building.

On a firm plaster base Christ is painted on a throne, blessing with his right hand and holding the Bible in his left. Around him are painted the four evangelists and their symbolic signs, the Holy Virgin, portraits of the apostles and other ornamentations typical of medieval Armenian miniatures. On both sides of Christ are the usual initials *HS* (for *Hisus*) and *KS* (for *Ḳristos*), on top of the first and beneath the second are the Greek equivalents. Next to the image of Christ the name of Grigor, the first catholicos of the Armenians of Egypt, is written as "*Tēr Grigoris Kaṭoghikos*" (*tēr* means master, lord, in

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[106] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, 236.
[107] A. Gartashian, *Data for the History of the Armenians in Egypt*, 7–8.

this case, father). There are two boxes in white on each side of the great fresco, and on these are the three groups of inscriptions, fifty-four words on thirty-three lines.[108] The following is a literal translation:

"Theodoros, painter and scribe from the province of Ḳessun, near the bridge of Shenje from the village of Makhṭellē—My father (is) a stone mason named Ḳristap̣or, God bless him and you and us all the Armenians that are (held) in slavery in Egypt—(completed) during the patriarchate of Father Grigor, nephew (sister's son) of Grigoris who is named Father Vaḥram".

"Christ, spreader of light have mercy on (me) the *metagh*", Khachatur".

"Christ have mercy on Sargis . . . the *metagh*".

Obviously we have three Armenians called Theodoros, Khachatur and Sargis working at the altar of the church, a fourth person is mentioned, he is the father of Theodoros the painter, Ḳristap̣or (or Christopher). The painter also alludes to the presence of other Armenians held in slavery in Egypt, and asks Christ's mercy upon all. Khachatur and Sargis call themselves "*metagh*". I find it very strange that it has escaped the attention of all the historians that anybody should describe himself as "*metagh*" or metal. But the word has another meaning which explains the condition of these men perfectly. In medieval sources the word "*metagh*" was used to refer to convicts condemned to hard labour and exile in remote mines of silver, copper, gold, etc.[109]

The fresco was completed during the term of Catholicos Grigor (1075–1117) and the latter was identified as the son of Martyrophil's sister. Theodoros is familiar with Martyrophil's secular name. The renovations of the White Monastery could have been arranged by Catholicos Grigor himself, but the identification of the latter through his uncle is very peculiar and points to an earlier acquaintance back in Ḳessun. Otherwise, it is not customary to mention the secular name of clergymen, and in particular that of a man of the status of Martyrophil, unless the person has a message to transmit.

The village of Makhṭellē in the province of Ḳessun (Kaythun, near Marash and north east of Raban, between Behesni and the Euphrates), is where Theodoros comes from and this is perhaps the most intriguing piece of information. During the early 1070's the principality

[108] See Appendix VIII.
[109] *New Dictionary of the Haigazian Language*, vol. II, 252.

of Ḳessun was under the control of Philaretus who in 1082 gave Ḳessun and Raban as vassal principalities to Gogh Vassil, son of a certain Bazrig from Ani.[110] According to Michael the Syrian, with his 300 men Gogh Vassil spread terror in the region looting mostly Syriac monasteries and churches in the mountains of Melitene.[111] Between the years 1075 and 1082, Gogh Vassil became a close associate of Philaretus. After the death of Philaretus in 1086, says Michael the Syrian, Gogh Vassil fortified himself in Ḳessun and the whole region that was deserted by the Arabs.[112]

According to modern Armenian sources, and based on the inscriptions, the White Monastery was transferred to the Armenians during the term of Catholicos Grigor and probably with the approval of Badr al-Jamālī, in other words between 1074 and 1094.[113] The murals and decorations that are said to be typically Armenian may have been added during the renovations to adapt the interior of the church to Armenian traditions. The early 1080's seem to me the closest possible period for the painting of the fresco. The question that needs to be answered is how and why this highly professional job was trusted to Armenian "slaves", and "criminal-convicts" as part of their "hard labour in exile"? If they were made to work for the Armenian Church in Egypt and if they were professionals, why would they still be kept as slaves and hard labourers, unless the Church had no control over the matter and these slaves belonged to some other party, i.e., the Fatimid authorities. Badr al-Jamālī employed many Armenian architects and builders in the construction of the walls and gates of Cairo, as I shall discuss later, but nothing is known of their status. It is hard to suggest any hypothesis about the circumstances in which these Armenians fell slave to the Fatimids, but judging from their native villages, their acquaintance with Martyrophil, and above all, the pious tone of the inscriptions, their orthodoxy can be granted with reasonable certainty.

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[110] A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, vol. II, 417–418.
[111] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, 162–163.
[112] Ibid., 187.
[113] Ṭorgom Gushakian, "*The White Monastery*", *The Ancient and Modern Armenian Churches of Egypt* [Yegiptosi ḥayots hin yev ardi yekeghetsinerẹ], (Cairo, 1927), 16–22. Of the same author also see: "Armenian Inscriptions in a Coptic Monastery of Upper Egypt" [Ḥayerēn aržanagruṭūnner verin Yegiptosi Ghẹpti vanḳi mẹ meǰ], Ṭēotik, *Everyone's Yearbook* [Amenun Taretsuytsẹ], (1923), 374–380.

CHAPTER FIVE

MUSLIM ARMENIAN VIZIERIAL RULE IN EGYPT—THE JAMĀLĪ HOUSE

Beginnings in Fatimid Aleppo: ʿAzīz al-Dawla and al-ghulām *Badr*

Bahrām's vizierate and its tragic aftermath would have lost much of its unique historical importance, had it not been a brief and violent interval in an otherwise peaceful century of Muslim and Armenian co-existence in Egypt. But taken as a transitory phenomenon in the last century of Fatimid history, the "Armenian period" could be summarized, as P. Hitti did, in a single paragraph: because of the perpetual wars between the Turkish, Berber and Sudanese battalions, the caliph al-Mustanṣir completely lost control over the situation. Drought, famine and epidemics drained the economic and social resources of Egypt. "In 1073 the vacillating caliph summoned the Armenian Badr al-Jamālī, a former slave, from his military governorship of ʿAkkā to act as vizier and commander in chief. The new Amīr al-Juyūsh took command with such vigour that he brought order out of apparent chaos and gave the Fatimid regime a new lease on life. But . . . neither Badr's efforts nor those of his son and successor, al-Malik al-Afḍal . . . could check the tide of decline".[1]

Six Muslim Armenian viziers, ruling a total of 58 years, constituted the highlights of the "Armenian period" in Fatimid Egypt. The first three Jamālī's—Badr, al-Afḍal and Kutayfāt—, formed a miniature dynasty. The *hayba* (awe-inspiring image) of Badr was very briefly renewed in vizier Yānis, a *mamlūk* of al-Afḍal. Less than fifteen years after Bahrām's death, in 1154, the Banū Ruzzīk, i.e., Ṭalāʾiʿ, his son Ruzzīk and other members of their clan took over for seven years, from 1154 to the end of 1162. Had everything gone according to plan and circumstances permitted, a grandson of Ṭalāʾiʿ (son of his daughter married to the caliph al-ʿĀḍid) would have reached the caliphate, similar to Badr's grandson al-Mustaʿlī.

[1] Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, (London, 1964), 622.

Abu'l-Najm Badr b. ʿAbdallāh al-Jamālī al-Mustanṣirī (1074–1094)

Better known as Amīr al-Juyūsh, Badr was the first and most famous among the Fatimids of Muslim Armenian origin. While Arab historians referred to him in very positive terms as one of the most important figures in the last century of Fatimid history in Egypt, medieval Armenian historians were completely silent about him. In Arab history his biographers start with his being a *mamlūk* of al-Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dawla b. Ḥammār (or ʿAmmār) of Tripoli, hence his epithet al-Jamālī. Otherwise, nothing more is known about Badr's earlier life in Syria, before his appointment as Fatimid military governor of Damascus in 1063. However, in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's history of Aleppo, known as *Zubdat al-Ḥalab fī Ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, we find a youth called Abu'l-Najm Badr (or Abū Najm) who was a *ghulām* of the Fatimid governor or *wālī* of Aleppo al-Amīr ʿAzīz al-Dawla Abū Shujāʿ Fātik al-Waḥīdī b. ʿAbdallāh al-Rūmī.

In addition to providing possible clues to the earlier life of Badr, the personality and career of ʿAzīz al-Dawla was the earliest known instance in the traditional collaboration between militant Armenians and the Muslim powers in Syria during the first quarter of the eleventh century. As such, the phenomenon of ʿAzīz al-Dawla is both an introduction to the subject of the Fatimid Armenians and a link between Armenian sectarian history and the history of Syria and Fatimid Egypt during the eleventh century.

As indicated in the last chapter, before the end of the tenth century, large militant factions were settled in the fortresses on the Euphrates and the valley of Orontes by the emperors John Tsimisces in 962 and Basil II in 999. Almost half a century before the massive onslaught ordered by the Emperor Constantine Monomachus and executed by Grigor Magistros in Upper Mesopotamia, these sectarians were active in Syria and Palestine. The persecutions of Magistros simply increased their numbers and power in the regions further south and west.

In the context of this study, the significance of ʿAzīz al-Dawla, "one of the most important Fatimid governors of Aleppo",[2] lay in his pursuit of the old sectarian ideal of an independent state. His brief career of six years (1016/407–1022/413) concentrated on creating a marcher principality in Aleppo, between the Greeks and the

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[2] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, 117.

Fatimids, similar to the *akritic* state of the Paulicians in Tephrike in the ninth century, and anticipating that of Philaretus in North Syria during the last quarter of the eleventh century.

ʿAzīz al-Dawla was an "Armenian *ghulām*" of Mangūtakīn al-ʿAzīzī, the Fatimid governor of Damascus during the reign of the caliph al-Ḥākim. Al-Maqrīzī described him as an "intelligent and pious Armenian" ("*kāna dayyinan armaniyyan ʿāqilan*").[3] The nature of the piety of ʿAzīz al-Dawla is not specified and his Islam seems to be granted. But the juxtaposition of the two terms in al-Maqrīzī could be indicative of a religiosity that was not so common. According to Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Mangūtakīn was very fond of ʿAzīz al-Dawla, whom he too described as wise, generous and courageous. On Jumādā the first of the year 1016/407, the caliph al-Ḥākim honoured the Amīr ʿAzīz al-Dawla Abū Shujāʿ by a "robe of honour", offered him a sword, a saddle embellished with gold ornaments and appointed him governor over Aleppo, where he arrived in Ramaḍān of the same year. In the same context, Ibn al-ʿAdīm mentions the two allegorical works that the famous poet and thinker Abu'l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī dedicated to the *Amīr al-Umarāʾ ʿAzīz al-Dawla wa Tāj al-Millah: Risālat al-Ṣāhil wa'l-Shāḥij* and *Kitāb al-Qāʾif*.[4]

On the extremities of the Fatimid Caliphate and in very close proximity with the Greeks, ʿAzīz al-Dawla established himself and worked on separationist projects. He built a palace and a bath next to the citadel of Aleppo, to which they were connected with secret passages. To inspire confidence in the populace, which was said to live under the constant threat of an invasion by the armies of Basil II, he ordered Asad al-Dawla Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās to bring his mother, al-Rabāb or "*Umm Ṣāliḥ*" to Aleppo only a year after his appointment. The objective was to show to the people that he was in alliance with the local Banū Kilāb against the Greek enemy. He issued coins and had his name mentioned from the pulpits of the mosques. Always according to Ibn al-ʿAdīm, on the exterior pediment of the Gate of Antioch, or *Bāb Anṭākia* on the walls of Aleppo, and on the silver chandeliers of the Great Mosque of Aleppo there were inscriptions bearing his name as "al-Sayyid Amīr al-Umarāʾ ʿAzīz al-Dawla".[5]

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[3] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-Ḥunafāʾ bi-Akhbār al-Aʾimma al-Fāṭimiyyīn al-Khulafāʾ*, (ed.) M. H. M. Aḥmad, (Cairo, 1971), 129.

[4] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab fī Taʾrīkh Ḥalab*, (ed.) Sāmi al-Dahhān, (Damascus, 1951–1968), in 3 vols., vol. I, 215–221. Also see T. Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, vol. I, 467.

[5] Ibid., 216.

In 1020, a short time before his disappearance, the caliph al-Ḥākim sent troops to the dissident north. ʿAzīz struck some kind of agreement with Basil II to come to his rescue. Previously, in 995 Basil II was in Aleppo, when the city was sieged by Fatimid forces under Mangūtakīn.[6] Emperor Basil II had reached *Marj al-Dibāj* (present Chukur Ava near ʿAynṭab), when news of al-Ḥākim's death reached the north. ʿAzīz al-Dawla annulled the deal and allied with the Banū Kilāb; the Greeks withdrew to Manazkert and occupied it. The people there, who were mostly Arabs and Armenians, left the city, for they were scared of the retaliation of the emperor. Ibn al-ʿAdīm called this exodus "*jaflat* (flight-scare) of ʿAzīz al-Dawla".[7] Ibn al-ʿAdīm does not specify the identity of those who were "scared" of the retaliation of Basil, a violent enemy of the Armenian sectarians known for their alliance with the Muslims. But in view of the nationality and background of ʿAzīz, and under the circumstances, it is possible that among these refugees there were unorthodox Armenians too who for centuries lived in Arab-controlled areas. In fact, the remark finds some justification in al-Maqrīzī's accounts of the year 1030, nine years after the death of al-ʿAzīz. During one of the small wars against the Greeks, a group of two thousand Armenian horsemen chase the Greeks and confiscate about four hundred mules, which they put up for sale in Aleppo for two dinars each.[8] Later in this study, in the context of the poet Usāma b. Munqidh, we find similar accounts of Armenian militant factions in the same areas.

Risālat al-Ṣāhil wa'l-Shāḥij of Abu'l ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī is a very important source about ʿAzīz al-Dawla and his times in the province of Aleppo; but unfortunately neither this figure nor the text have found interest among historians. It seems that the poet was on good terms with ʿAzīz al-Dawla, himself a lover of poetry. The allegory was written upon the pleas of al-Maʿarrī's nephews, who were being urged to pay property tax for a barren piece of land they owned in Maʿarra. The characters in the allegory are a hard working and blindfolded mule called al-Shāḥij in Maʿarra, a horse called al-Ṣāhil, a devious pigeon called Fakhīta, a camel and a fox. Al-Shāḥij the mule works hard on a barren and difficult land and depends on the fox to bring him news and rumours from Aleppo, the capital of the province. The reader is led to suspect the objectives of the negotiations and

[6] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 183.
[7] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, vol. I, 219.
[8] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 179.

correspondence between ʿAzīz al-Dawla and Basil II, who were also exchanging presents. In the allegory, it is said that a gift of over thirty Greek *ghulāms* was sent by the emperor to please ʿAzīz al-Dawla.[9] In the same context we read that rumours were circulating among the people of Aleppo that "the *Sulṭān*—may God prolong his life—ordered that these *ghulāms* be purified (i.e., circumcized) . . . as it was required by his faith . . . their case being similar to certain syllables in poetry, that cannot be used unless something is omitted of them".[10]

In the last parts of the book, al-Maʿarrī depicts the condition of the people of Aleppo who lived in a state of perpetual fear. They often left the city scared of another Greek invasion similar to that of the year 968/358, when massacres, pillaging and other acts of violence were committed by the Byzantine armies. The collaboration of ʿAzīz al-Dawla with Asad al-Dawla Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās was another cause for concern for al-Shāḥij (al-Maʿarrī himself?). Five years before the arrival of ʿAzīz al-Dawla, the Banū Mirdās entered Aleppo and were it not for the Fatimid conquest of Aleppo, they would have established themselves. In 1024/415, two years after the death of ʿAzīz al-Dawla, the Mirdāsids returned to Aleppo.[11]

ʿAzīz al-Dawla's Aleppine principality flourished until the year 1021; al-Ḥākim's sister Sitt al-Mulk who, following her brother's death, took control for four years, temporarily tolerated the shrewd *wālī* of Aleppo. In the name of the young caliph al-Ẓāhir, she even sent him a "robe of honour" (*khilʿa*), which was traditionally granted to "valued members of the caliph's entourage".[12] In the spring of 1022, ʿAzīz was the victim of an assassination plot masterminded by the Fatimid court and executed by two of his favourite *ghulams*, an Indian called "Tuzūn" or "Teedhun" and another known as Abu'l-Najm Badr. Ibn al-ʿAdīm briefly relates that ʿAzīz al-Dawla was stabbed while asleep after a drinking session, by the Indian *ghulām*, who in turn was killed by the second youth, Abu'l-Najm Badr. In *Kunūz al-Dhahab*, Abu'l-Najm Badr is said to be "an Armenian *ghulām* and *mamlūk* of Mangūtakīn".[13]

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[9] Abu'l-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī, *Risālat al-Ṣāhil wa'l-Shāḥij*, (ed., introd., notes) ʿĀ'isha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, 2nd ed. (Cairo, Dār al-Maʿārif, 1984), 695.

[10] Ibid., 692.

[11] Ibid., The Introduction, 28–30.

[12] Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo*, (New York, 1992), 30.

[13] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, vol. I, 219–220, n. 3. Al-Maqrīzī has a more elaborate account in *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 129–131.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī gave a somehow different version of ʿAzīz al-Dawla Fātik al-Waḥīdī and his tragic end. Towards the last days of al-Ḥākim's term, and before his disappearance, he wrote, ʿAzīz al-Dawla had become powerful in his province and rebelled against the caliphate. After al-Ḥākim's death, his sister Sitt al-Mulk sent the *wālī* occasional rewards while working on plans to remove him and appoint a more loyal Fatimid governor in north Syria. In preparation, she bribed the *ghulām* Abu'l-Najm and was even said to have promised him his master's position in the case of the latter's liquidation. Always according to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Badr first warned the Indian of his master's ill intentions towards him, then gained the poor *ghulām*'s confidence and even sympathy through material rewards and possibility of greater honours. The assassination plot to be executed following a pleasure and drinking session, was planned by Badr. After the decapitation of ʿAzīz al-Dawla, Badr managed to have the Indian killed by the other *ghulāms* of the palace. He then informed Sitt al-Mulk of the matter. In the name of the caliph al-Ẓāhir, she bestowed upon him all the honours that belonged to his master as well as the latter's possessions, as Ibn Taghrī Birdī puts it, and sent him robes of honour. The same story, in greater detail is found in al-Maqrīzī's *Ittiʿāẓ*.[14] We find the rest of the story in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's history of Aleppo. As a reward for his service to the caliphate, Badr was granted the titles of "*Wafiyy al-Dawla wa-Amīnuhā*" and briefly stayed in charge of the citadel. However, Fatimid troops were soon dispatched to Aleppo led by Saʿīd al-Dawla ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Ḍayf. The latter captured Abu'l-Najm Badr and brought him out of the citadel in chains. He was then transferred to Ṣafiyy al-Dawla Abī ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad, the son of Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar b. Fallāḥ al-Kutāmī (who was a man of letters). After Ṣafiyy al-Dawla left Aleppo in 1022, nothing is heard of this ambitious Armenian *ghulām* and *mamlūk* of ʿAzīz al-Dawla. According to al-Maqrīzī, Badr stayed two years in the citadel of Aleppo as governor, replacing ʿAzīz al-Dawla whose position he was promised by Sitt al-Mulk, as a reward for eliminating his master.[15]

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[14] Ibn Taghrī Birdī al-Atabekī, Jamāl ed-dīn Abu'l-Maḥāsin Yūsuf, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, in 10 vols. (Cairo, 1929–1972) and (Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, Beirut, 1992). From the latter ed., vol. IV, 195; also see T. Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, vol. II, 399–400.

[15] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, vol. I, 220–221; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 131.

So far, no other Armenian Abu'l-Najm Badr is known in Syria at that particular time, and the identity of the two Badrs seems quite possible. Badr was in his eighties when he died in 1094, he must have been born around 1010 and been a *ghulām* in 1022. Furthermore, it is not difficult to trace the seeds of the political personality of the Amīr al-Juyūsh in this ambitious and ruthless Armenian adolescent. The career of Badr in Syria would have remained in obscurity, like that of many Muslim Armenians there, if it were confined to Syria.

As far as historians were concerned, Badr's political career started on April 1063/455, when he, or "*Tāj al-Umarā' al-Muẓaffar, Muqaddam al-Juyūsh Sharaf al-Mulk*" Abu'l-Najm Badr al-Jamālī, a *mamlūk* of al-Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dawla b. Ḥammār arrived in Damascus as *wālī*. He settled in Mizza, near Damascus, with a financial administrator, whom Ibn al-Qalānisī mentions as "*al-Sharīf al-Qāḍī Thiqat al-Dawla dhu'l-Jalālayn* Abu'l-Ḥasan Yaḥyā b. Zayd al-Ḥusnī al-Zaydī".[16] Before his arrival to this very important post, the Fatimids were already involved in difficult confrontations in Syria with both the local factions and the Seljuk Turks. Badr was always known for his loyalty to the Fatimids and a supporter of their cause in Syria.

After a little over a year as military governor of Damascus, war broke out between his troops and the "people" and the *aḥdāth* of Damascus. Badr left, but after three years, in July of 1066/458, he was reappointed as governor of Damascus and the whole of al-Shām (Ibn al-Qalānisī mentions his titles as *Amīr al-Juyūsh* and *Sayf al-Islām*). He settled in the Palace of Salṭana on the plain of Bāb al-Ḥadīd. The news of his son Sha'bān's death in Ascalon reached him during this period.[17]

To underline the loyalty of Badr to the Fatimids and the contrary in the case of the Turks, Ibn al-Qalānisī compared him with Nāṣir al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān, the previous governor of Damascus. Enmity between these figures had deeper political reasons. While in Syria, Ibn Ḥamdān made several attempts to liquidate Badr using bedouin and urban forces opposed to the Fatimids. In turn, Badr executed many of Ibn Ḥamdān's supporters.[18] In 1068 Ibn Ḥamdān led an uprising against al-Mustanṣir in Egypt with a group of Turkish chief-

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[16] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, S. Zakkar, ed., (Damascus, 1983), 154.
[17] Ibid., 157.
[18] T. Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, vol. II, p. 636.

tains and amīrs, with whom he divided the great sums of money he made the caliph pay him. In Syria, the "Amīr al-Juyūsh showed his allegiance, partisanship and sympathy to al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh", says Ibn al-Qalānisī, "but he was unable to reach for the latter's assistance or find ways to support him". In Cairo, the rebels increased their pressure on the royal treasury and on the officer in charge, a man called Ibn Kudayna, in particular; they refused to believe that the treasury was completely bankrupt.[19] By the year 1070 the Seljuks had overrun Aleppo and compelled the predominantly Shī'ī population to declare its allegiance to the 'Abbasids.[20] Opposition to Fatimid rule and Seljuk presence in the north, made control over Syria and Damascus in particular extremely difficult. The "militant" factions of the city, or the "*'askariyya*", as Ibn al-Qalānisī puts it, revolted and after a fierce confrontation, Badr was again obliged to leave the palace of al-Salṭana.[21]

In Egypt, the Turkish chieftains sought the eradication of the Fatimid caliphate to ease the Turkish penetration into Egypt and north Africa. Syria was practically lost to them in March 1068, when Badr left Qaṣr al-Salṭana as the last symbol of Fatimid power there. (In the same year a great earthquake shook Jerusalem, Palestine and the coast up to Banyās.)[22] In his new position as military governor of 'Akkā, Badr's primary role was to control the coastal towns up to Sidon and to ensure open roads of communication between the latter and Egypt. When his troops put a siege on Tyre in 1069, the governor of the city, *qāḍī*-prince al-Nāṣiḥ Thiqat al-Thiqat 'Ayn al-Dawla Abu'l-Ḥasan b. 'Abdallāh b. Abī 'Aqīl asked the assistance of the Turks.[23] For a while Badr had to ease the siege to defend Sidon against a Turkish expedition led by Qaralu (or Qorlu). The siege of Tyre was resumed in 1070/462. The Turkish garrison led by Ibn Khān eventually joined Badr, when their leader was murdered by Ibn Abī 'Aqīl.[24] By the occupation of Tyre, Badr practically imposed a maritime siege on the Turks inland. Fortified in 'Akkā he was still—administratively speaking—the governor of Syria and from his strategic position he led the resistance against the Turks who kept

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[19] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, 159–160.
[20] F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 204.
[21] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, 157.
[22] Ibid., 159.
[23] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 47.
[24] T. Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, 643–644.

crossing the Taurus into Syria. Locally, he had to deal with the *aḥdāth* and the Sunnī population of Damascus.

During the period between the execution of Yazūrī (1058) and Badr's vizierate (1074), rivalries between the Maghribī Kutāmā tribes, the Zuwayla, the Berbers, and the Sicilians led to civil war in Egypt for the next decade.[25] The military factions that accompanied al-Mu'izz from al-Maghrib to Egypt felt themselves in a special position in relation to the Fatimid throne and maintained this position to the end. The Kutāmā factions that the caliph al-'Azīz had introduced, were in constant conflict with the Turkish forces. Generally, both the *Maghāriba* (westerners) and the *Mashāriqa* (easterners) were involved in perpetual wars and vandalism.[26]

The Sudanese military slaves started appearing in Egypt during the office of Kāfūr al-Ikhshīdī. The caliph al-Ḥākim employed these black battalions against the Sunnī population of Fusṭāṭ;[27] the support which al-Mustanṣir's mother, herself a Sudanese, provided to the Sudanese troops granted them political importance. During the first years of 1060's, rivalries between the Sudanese factions of the army, the Turks, the Kutāma and the Berbers eventually developed into large scale civil war in Egypt. Emerging as the strongest party, the Turks increased their pressure on the populace and the court in particular. In 1066/459 the war reached its climax.[28] Led by Nāṣir al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān they allied with the Arab and Lawāta Berbers against the Sudanese, gained control over the capital and drove the black troops to al-Ṣa'īd and the clashes spread to the provinces.[29] In the capital, al-Mustanṣir was incapacitated. After a short period out of Cairo,[30] Ḥamdānid Nāṣir al-Dawla "the victorious commander of the Turks", was virtually in control of Egypt. Al-Mustanṣir was not only deprived of all power but denied all legitimacy as well. Preparations were made to declare Turkish allegiance to the 'Abbasids. In the year 1070 by orders of Nāṣir al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān, the name of the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Qā'im (1031–1075/422–467) was pronounced

[25] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. IV, 90.
[26] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 36–37.
[27] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. IV, 181–182.
[28] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 44.
[29] Egypt was divided into four provinces or *wilayāts*: Qūṣ and its governor was in charge of the whole al-Ṣa'īd, the *Sharqiyya*, which included the regions east of Dumyāṭ, the *Gharbiyya*, the whole territory between the Dumyāṭ and Rashīd, and the province of Alexandria. (See Surūr, *The Fatimid State*, 144.)
[30] See Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 44–45.

in the Friday *khuṭba* in the mosques of Alexandria.[31] To the vizierate of Badr in early 1074, the period was marked by total breakdown of order and "constant plundering and ravaging of the country by Turkish troops".[32] The low level of the Nile that lasted seven years (1065–1072) caused a severe economic crisis, epidemics and famine. Pillaging and destruction reached the Fatimid libraries in the year 1069.[33] Finally war broke out among the Turks themselves. Nāṣir al-Dawla and his whole family were massacred. Another warlord, Īldekiz took over and under the pretext of saving the caliph, asked financial rewards. Like the treasury, the royal palace was emptied and the caliph lived alone surviving on a small daily ration of bread a woman brought him. Eventually al-Mustanṣir summoned Badr from ʿAkkā, accepting the latter's condition to accompany troops of his choice into Egypt.[34]

Sometime in December of the year 1073 Badr sailed from ʿAkkā with one hundred ships loaded with mostly Armenian and other soldiers, estimated between two and seven thousand men.[35] In reference to the *juyūshiyya* forces, al-Maqrīzī says that Badr erected an army of Armenians and that "since then the Armenians constituted the majority of the armed forces, while the Kutāma of the Maghrib turned to ordinary citizens, after holding the highest positions in the state".[36]

During early 1074, Īldekiz was in a position of absolute power; in Dumyāṭ, Badr's men faced violent resistance by the Lawāta Berbers led by Sulaymān al-Lawātī. In the same area, Badr's troops eliminated another tribe known as the Melḥiyah, that were said to be part of the Fatimid army. These Maghribī tribes were in the north, the Sudanese black troops were in Upper Egypt and in the capital the Turks under Īldekiz were in control of the military supplies of the state.[37] Military obstacles outside Cairo were relatively minor and were individually taken care of.

As a first step and to relieve the famine, while in the region of Dumyāṭ, Badr borrowed money from the merchants of Tinnīs and

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[31] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 203.
[32] Op. cit.
[33] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 408–409. Also see, 335–337.
[34] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 204.
[35] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 211–212.
[36] Ibid., III, 18. Speaking of Badr's Armenian fighters constituting the majority of the Fatimid army, he says: [wa aqāma lahu jundan wa ʿaskaran min al-arman faṣāra fī ḥīna'izdhin muʿẓam al-jaysh al-arman wa dhahabat al-kutāma].
[37] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 45.

bought grain. He entered Cairo after al-Mustanṣir managed to remove Īldekiz (as a condition Badr had put). According to al-Maqrīzī, Badr appeared to the Turkish chieftains as an ally and "spoke ill" of the caliph al-Mustanṣir. They seem to have mistaken him for a warlord. His men started entering Cairo in small numbers and their number eventually reached nine hundred, always according to al-Maqrīzī. After a period which he spent gaining their confidence, Badr's men eventually killed the Turkish amīrs and were granted all the possessions and estates of their victims. The caliph was not in a position to calculate the risks involved in hosting a powerful man like Badr and he allowed him to take over the rulership of the caliphate.[38] In his typical ruthlessness and pragmatic style, Badr eliminated high officials, judges and amīrs of the state. He recovered some of the looted treasures of the caliphate and after the liberation of Cairo, was proclaimed Vizier of the Sword and the Pen.

Badr's measures against the dissident elements covered the tribes of Qays and Banū Sunbus.[39] As part of his military operations, Badr moved to the region of the Buḥayra where he was said to have exterminated about twenty thousand Arab tribesmen. In 1076, Alexandria and Upper Egypt were cleared of the tribes of Tha'āliba and Juhayna which had found refuge there.[40] Within less than two years Badr brought the economic and military crises under control. From then on he ruled over Egypt as an "absolute monarch, and al-Mustanṣir had no choice but to delegate him authority in all matters".[41]

In Cairo Badr's private Armenian troops—mounted and others—estimated to be over seven thousand by al-Maqrīzī, lived in *al-Ḥārat al-Ḥusayniyya* or the district of Ḥusayniyya. The Armenian community of Cairo settled in this area too which became a residential area with shops and markets. According to al-Maqrīzī, the Ḥusayniyya was divided into two parts: a section, where the soldiers stayed, close to Bāb al-Futūḥ, and another near Bāb al-Naṣr. Later on, just outside Bāb al-Naṣr, a "great cemetery" was built and the tomb of the Jamālīs stood there to al-Maqrīzī's day, as he says. Gradually, the

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[38] Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ*, vol. II, 312.

[39] 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt—The Political History* [Ẓuhūr khilāfat al-fāṭimiyyīn wa suqūṭuhā fī Miṣr—al-Ta'rīkh al-siyāsī], (Alexandria, 1968), 394.

[39] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 394.

[40] Ibid., 394–395.

[41] Ibid., 395–396.

inhabitants of the Ḥusayniyya nearby and Cairo buried their dead in this cemetery.[42]

Badr was a figure of great "*hayba*"; he was "extremely harsh in his dealings and severe in punishments", says Ibn Muyassar. "Countless numbers of people, including prominent men and leaders of the Egyptians were killed during his term, but at his hands the country was regenerated after having been corrupted, and reconstructed after being destroyed. He was an Armenian by origin and a *mamlūk* of Jamāl al-Dawla b. Ḥammār".[43] Events proved that al-Mustanṣir's decision to resort to Badr was sound; the intervention of Badr and perhaps its influence on the course of events granted the dying caliphate one more century. Although Badr did not completely eradicate the other militant factions, which almost led to the downfall of the Fatimids, he achieved a high level of internal security and economic stability that was remarkable when measured against the dimensions of the problems which faced the caliphate before his arrival.

By no explicit plan, but acting as military dictator and tough disciplinarian, Badr re-introduced some order into the military. Known as the *ḥujariyya*, the official Fatimid troops were given more importance and after a long absence, due to the increase in the power of the socio-military factions, these state troops started regaining their role.[44] With the exception of the Sudanese, whom he had under control, Badr deprived the other factions, except his own, of all military and political significance.[45] The use of a private force as power base was not new; vizier Ibn Killis had his *wazīriyya* troops, but the scale of the political involvement of Badr's forces known as the *juyūshiyya* (after him, the *Amīr al-Juyūsh*) was greater. Badr and after him his son and grandson, relied primarily on their compatriots. Even the guards of al-Afḍal's gardens were hired from among them.[46] Ten years after the death of their master, the Afḍaliyya troops supported Kutayfāt and staged a coup against caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ. According to the historian H. Sufian, the last force that was in charge of guarding the Fatimid palace was composed of Armenian "*ketrij*"s (the equivalent of *fityān*).[47]

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[42] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, III, 33–34.
[43] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 30.
[44] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 401.
[45] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 18.
[46] H. Sufian, *The Armenian Mamluks and Princes*, 38.
[47] Ibid., 23.

The majority of the Juyūshiyya forces were Armenian in the beginning,[48] the Sudanese blacks joining them later on. During the twelfth century, "two bodies of troops . . . were prominent": the Rayḥāniyya and the Juyūshiyya and in both, the blacks constituted the majority.[49] It seems that Badr arranged that the black troops be employed to block Seljuk attempts to advance towards Egypt from the east. But until the middle of the twelfth century the name Juyūshiyya referred to their initial patron, i.e., Amīr al-Juyūsh Badr al-Jamālī.[50]

In addition to being the instrument of his power, Badr's army became a factor in reorganizing the Fatimid state army which started disintegrating during the first half of the reign of al-Mustanṣir (who rose to the throne at age seven). "The focus on Badr's army reflect[ed] the drastic change in the hold of political power in the state. The Fatimid imāmate was transferred into a military dictatorship".[51] After consolidating his position, Badr's Juyūshiyya forces received additional numbers from military slaves. At his death he left a private force of seven hundred *ghulāms*.[52] Centuries of experience in a Muslim milieu lay at the basis of the ease in which Badr's "heretical" Armenians adapted themselves to the new environment. One must not forget that Muslim sympathies were part of the doctrinal-political formation of the Paulicians since the early decades of the eighth century. The contrary example was the case of Bahrām and his "orthodox" Armenians that stood out, as al-Ḥāfiẓ said, as a "stain on a clear surface". Until that time no ethnic or religious friction was recorded between Badr's Armenians and the Muslims of Egypt. Badr's men were soon raised to important positions as reliable supporters. Amīr Bādīs and Nāṣir al-Dawla Aftakīn were examples of the first generation that arrived with Badr. The first was the grandfather of vizier ʿAbbās who held an important post in Alexandria; Aftakīn was one of Badr's Armenian military slaves who rose in rank to become governor of Alexandria, but later on he supported Nizār against al-Afḍal in the dispute over al-Mustanṣir's heir.[53]

Badr's vizierate was obviously a reward for saving the caliphate but it proved to be a turning point in the history of both the position

[48] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, vol. III, 483, 508.
[49] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 127.
[50] Op. cit.
[51] Ibid., 95.
[52] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 331.
[53] Ibid., 276–277. G. Mẹssẹrlian, *Prominent Armenians in Egypt*, 99.

and the caliphate. For the first time in Fatimid history, al-Mustanṣir proclaimed Badr not just vizier with executive powers (*wazīr al-tanfīdh*) but vizier with full delegated powers (*wazīr al-tafwīḍ*).[54] Probably in a moment of ecstasy for being saved from certain destruction, al-Mustanṣir put Badr in the position of a "father" to him (and his Sudanese mother as well). He described Badr as the "guardian", "the eyes" and the "arm" of the caliphate.[55] The ceremony of Badr's appointment was a unique and unprecedented event. The caliph presented the decree of proclamation in his handwriting and wrapped in a golden case. By this decree, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* authorized Badr as sole delegated administrator of the country, "to reform all that was corrupt and destroy everything that stood in resistance or persisted in its rebellious course".[56] A copy of this official decree was sent to al-Yaman, the last remaining province outside Egypt under Fatimid rule, in addition to fragments in al-Shām.

As part of this ceremony, al-Mustanṣir offered the new vizier the white robe symbolic of the Fatimids and as a sign of his blessing, he threw on Badr's shoulders his own robe. A whole series of pieces of official costume were offered to Badr, as symbolic of his offices. Among them there was a turban with a tail that was worn by the military governors of Egypt to indicate his position as commander in chief of the army; one end of this turban was wrapped under the chin and it meant that the wearer was of the men of the royal palace. A long robe embroidered with gold and a diamond necklace instead of the ordinary gold chain distinguished him as vizier of *tanfīdh*. Finally, Badr was dressed up in the embellished pallium of the Chief of the Muslim *qāḍīs* (judges).[57]

By the terms of this proclamation, the titles of the Fatimid vizier underwent a radical change: all the viziers henceforth carried more or less the same titles. While previously they were known as "*wazīr*", they were now addressed as "*al-sayyid*", or Lord. The titles of Badr were: "Most Illustrious Lord (*al-Sayyid al-Ajall*), Commander of Armies

[54] For a detailed discussion of this theme see 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuẓum al-Fāṭimiyyīn wa Rusūmuhum fī Miṣr*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1953–1955), vol. I, 53–55.

[55] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall of the Fatimid Caliphate*, 404–405.

[56] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 304, and A. Mājid, *Nuẓum al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 83. The passage: [wa qad qalladaka amīru'l mu'minīn jamī'a jawāmi' tadbīrihi wa nāṭa bika al-naẓar fī kulli mā warā' sarīrihī . . . min dhalika mudabbiran li'l-bilād wa muṣliḥan li'l-fasād wa mudammiran ahl al-'inād].

[57] A. Majid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 406.

(*Amīr al-Juyūsh*), Sword of Islam (*Sayf al-Islām*), Helper of the Imām (*Nāṣir al-Imām*), Protector of the *Qāḍīs* of the Muslims (*Kāfil Quḍāt al-Muslimīn*), Guide of the Missionaries of the Believers (i.e., the Ismāʿīlīs, *Hādī Duʿāt al-Mu'minīn*).[58] His name appeared on inscriptions as: "*Fatā* of the Commander of the Faithful . . . Abu'l-Najm Badr al-Mustanṣirī". The term *fatā* "was more common in the Muslim west" than in the east and it indicated the patron-client relationship. But the case of al-Mustanṣir and Badr was unusual, the master being less powerful than the "client".[59] The terms of this peculiar relationship appeared to be in harmony with Fatimid tradition, but facts on the ground were different. Badr chose *Amīr al-Juyūsh*, "Commander of the Armies" as his only patronymic. His private forces and military slaves, his properties, and the mosques he built were identified as "Juyūshī", i.e., belonging to *Amīr al-Juyūsh*.[60]

Badr's exceptionally powerful position in the vizierate marked the beginning of what some scholars described as the period of "dictatorial" viziers.[61] The monopoly of power, the career and the legacy of the "Jamālī house of military viziers"[62] must also be studied on another level, i.e., the career and objectives of Armenian sectarians in Syria during those periods of the tenth to twelfth centuries. About half a century later another clan, the Banū Ruzzīk arrived in Egypt with a deliberate plan to attain power. The office of the vizier in the Fatimid caliphate was different from the Umayyad and ʿAbbasid traditions.[63] In the Maghrib, the Fatimid caliph controlled the administration through various officers. Even al-Qā'id Jawhar, who acted as vizier before the arrival of al-Muʿizz to Cairo, had "only representative executive function without delegated authority". In this period of the Caliphate (909–1074), the position of the vizier amounted to the Sunnī *wizārat tanfīdh* or executive ministry. It involved a *wisāṭa* or mediation between the caliph and the populace. "Holders of this office were selected largely from men of letters, *arbāb al-qalam*", and

[58] Op. cit.
[59] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 47.
[60] Ibid., 47–48.
[61] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 407.
[62] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 46.
[63] For the definition of *wizāra* see al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, vol. V, 488. For the office of the *kātib* in the Umayyad system, see vol. III, 277. For a general notion about the divisions in the Fatimid army and administration see Appendix IV.

were civilians. In addition to being "*wazīr al-tafwīḍ*" for the first time, Badr was the first military man to become "*wazīr al-qalam*".[64]

In connection with the institution of the vizierate in Islam, according to Vatikiotis, there is an "alleged reference" to it in the Qur'ān (Surah XX, 29–32): that the office serves for the "strengthening of the earthly kingdom". Furthermore, he adds that this verse is supported by a *ḥadīth* (oral tradition): "If God wishes well for the *amīr* He would provide him with a trustworthy *wazīr* to remind him when he forgets and assist him when he remembers; if God wishes for him otherwise, he would provide him with a bad *wazīr*".[65] According to Sunnī theory, a *wazīr al-tafwīḍ* or a "minister with delegated . . . powers requires the same qualifications that the caliph must have to assume office, except that of belonging to Quraysh. As such, he has complete authority in his office without referring to the caliph in matters of the *wazirate*". He can appoint governors, decide the allocation of public funds, etc.[66] In Fatimid Ismā'īlism the unique metaphysical position of the caliph-Imām does not theoretically at least allow a delegation of caliphal powers to anyone.

The appointment of Badr took place in extraordinary circumstances and his vizierate established a precedent and practice that continued to the end of the caliphate. Although Ya'qūb b. Killis was the first man to be addressed as "*wazīr*", "the first great minister from among military men was Badr al-Jamālī" and the year 1074 indeed marked "the triumph of wazirial prerogative over caliphal authority. From this point on, the institution of *wazīr* became identical to that existing in Baghdad".[67] Well aware of the obvious imbalance his vizierate was bound to create in relation to the Fatimid imāmate, Badr divided the roles from the start. As the Ismā'īlī Imām, al-Mustanṣir was confined to a primarily spiritual role; Shī'ī-Ismā'īlī peculiarities that were introduced initially by al-Qā'id Jawhar were reestablished like the addition to the *adhān* of the sentence "*Ḥayy 'alā khayr al-'amal*". This and similar measures insured him the reputation of a devout Shī'ī Muslim. However, since during his and later on al-Afḍal's terms, the position and powers of the caliph lost priority and effectivity, on

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[64] Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *The Fatimid Theory of State*, (Lahore, 1957), 96.
[65] Ibid., 95. The *ḥadīth* is from al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfa Abū Muḥammad al-Maghribī al-Nu'mān, *Da''ā'imu'l-Islām wa dhikr al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām wa'l-qaḍāyā wa'l aḥkām 'an ahl bayt al-Rasūl*, (ed.) A. A. A. Fyzee, (Cairo, 1951), 399–400.
[66] Ibid., 96–97.
[67] Ibid., 98.

the level of Fatimid ceremony, where the centrality of the caliph was most of all manifest, the change left its imprint. A good part of the traditional Fatimid rituals were omitted by Badr and al-Afḍal. P. Sanders points out that "there is evidence of dramatic change in the observance of festivals during the years when the wazir Badr al-Jamālī . . . and his son al-Afḍal . . . were the virtual rulers of the Fatimid Empire".[68]

The secularization of the Fatimid state and the urbanization of Cairo lay behind these and many other measures Badr and al-Afḍal took. After the latter's death, rituals were restored by Badr's great grandson caliph al-Āmir and his vizier Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'iḥī. Ma'mūn's restoration of "the customs that had existed before the days of Badr and al-Afḍal", as Sanders explains, was indeed a recreation of "ritual *lingua franca*" "out of the landscape, court ceremonies, and popular religious practices of the population of Fusṭāṭ".[69] However, even if ritual receded, as a direct result of the diminution of the effectivity of the caliph and his centrality, Ismā'īlism as the state religion was once again reestablished after losing ground during the civil war. Theological seminars ("*Bāb al-da'wa*") were opened during Badr's term and by his initiative for the teaching of the doctrines of Fatimid Ismā'īlism. The reason was possibly more political than religious: in the restoration of the Fatimid creed, Badr saw the interest of the state. His active role in the organization of the *da'wa* turned Fatimid Cairo into the center of Ismā'īlism, Fatimid propaganda reached unprecedented levels and al-Mustanṣir was recognized as the rightful Imām of the Ismā'īlīs.[70] In other words the Fatimid state was revived through its spiritual role.

On the administrative levels, al-Mustanṣir was almost completely redundant, he was even deprived of appointing the *qāḍīs*; these appointments were made on Badr's behalf.[71] Badr was careful not to antagonize or alienate the largely Sunnī population of Egypt: he gave both the Sunnī and Shī'ī communities freedom to apply their own laws of inheritance and the like.[72] He balanced the return of Ismā'īlī teaching and propaganda by ending "the practice of following the Fatimid law in those cases when it differed from the other religious

[68] P. Sanders, *Ritual, Politics*, 67.
[69] Ibid., 74–75.
[70] F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 213.
[71] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 137.
[72] Ibid., 138.

legal systems. Fatimid law was put on an equal footing with the Sunnī schools of law".[73] With an obvious exaggeration, it is estimated that during the reign of al-Mustanṣir, the number of the mosques and sanctuaries reached thirty-six thousand. Badr himself sponsored and financed the construction and renovation of several mosques.

These apparently pro-Fatimid measures and his success in making Cairo the center of Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*, did not mean that Badr had any intention of working towards the Fatimization of Egypt, because the initiative would have endangered his political plans. The question about the true religious loyalties of Badr is irrelevant. No doubt, Badr was a deeply religious man, but his religious zeal lacked doctrines, on the basis of which the orthodoxy of any particular line could be judged. In fact this was the peculiarity of Armenian sectarian spirituality: the dismissal of all doctrines, except the belief in one, all-powerful, just God and the commandment of love (which they interpreted as being both physical and spiritual and as an equalizing social factor).

We have no record of the private life of Badr except his friendship with the ascetic Christian King Solomon of Nubia. This is perhaps the only chronicle available about the "other side" of this complex personality. Both al-Maqrīzī[74] and Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian have the story of this African King who found refuge (sometime in 1079, according to the former) in the Church of al-Wādī, "three days' journey from Aswān". There, "he spent his time worshipping God at his church". He is quoted as saying that "Who is there among the kings that can be saved by God while he still governs among men, and that is not swayed by his passions, and does not shed blood unjustly, and does not force men to do that which is not right for them?". Always according to Abū Ṣāliḥ, Badr invited Solomon to Cairo, where he received him in royal honors and lodged him in an exquisite palace. "In this house", continues Abu Ṣāliḥ, "the king lived for one year, and he [the vizier] visited him constantly, and conversed with him on many subjects and listened to his words; and found that he sought God . . . with all his heart and mind, renouncing all that men desire". The King was buried in the Church of al-Khandaq (where Jawhar and vizier Bahrām were buried too) "during the patriarchate

[73] Ibid., 197.
[74] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 320.

of Cyril, the sixty-seventh patriarch".[75] In 1084, Badr arranged that the Church of al-Khandaq be transferred to the Armenians;[76] it was then reconstructed and became one of the biggest churches of Cairo. After 1169, following Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's persecutions against the Armenians, the church was left to the Copts.[77]

Irrespective of their declared loyalties to different trends in Islam, and despite doctrinal flaws, the Islam of the Jamālīs retained a sincere spiritual zeal. It is indeed surprising to find that they were all referred to as Armenians, many decades after their initial arrival. It seems that the cultural syncretism which gave rise to sectarian, revolutionary and apocalyptic movements (like Ismā'īlism itself) underlay the intimacy the sectarians had with Islam at the same time maintaining their adherence to their Armenian identity.

Badr is often mentioned in the context of his agrarian reforms, particularly at the beginning of his term. The roots of his populist and generous attitudes may lie in Fatimid history in Egypt, as some see. Historian Surūr quotes a passage from Jawhar's famous Oath of Confidence to the people of Egypt during the first year of his arrival. The Fatimids started distributing some of the state-owned lands renting them for investment. Members of the military often benefited from this type of *iqṭā'*.[78] Badr took practical steps towards encouraging the agricultural sector; after a "ruthless and sanguinary beginning", the *fallāḥīn* (the peasants) were the people who first saw the benefits of the new regime.[79] Badr relieved them of land and produce tax for three years, until they could regain some of their previous levels of production and income.[80] Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī gives figures about the economic recovery due to Badr's benevolent policy and the atmosphere of security and confidence his rule granted to the country.[81]

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[75] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, fol. 2a, 2.
[76] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 184; vol. III, 34; vol. III, 179; vol II, 225; vol. IV, 348.
[77] Ibid., vol. III, 34. During his term and as part of his highly centralized administration, Badr asked the Patriarch of the Copts to establish his see in Cairo to keep him under his direct control. Coptic historians have several stories about the intervention of Badr in the affairs of the Copts with the intention of ending internal disputes.
[78] Muḥammad Surūr, *The Fatimid State in Egypt*, (Cairo, 1965–1966), 164. For Jawhar's Oath see al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ*, I, 151–152.
[79] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 151.
[80] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 212.
[81] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. V, 116.

According to him, in the year 1090 the revenue of Egypt increased by about fifty per cent.[82]

It is believed that the administrative division of Egypt into twenty-one districts with their centers and subdivisions, was applied by Badr for the first time.[83] Badr is also given credit for initiating military reforms in the *ḥujariyya* forces as regular Fatimid troops.[84] Badr's contribution to the recovery of the people from the aftermath of civil war and famine extended to the caliph personally. Royal treasures and property were recovered from the looters and returned to the palace. Less than hundred years later, Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn regarded royal treasures and the palace as part of war spoils and distributed them to the Ghuzz and Kurds of his army.

The foreign policy of Badr can be reduced to a single concern: to keep the Seljuk Turks out of Egypt. In all respects Fatimid Egypt was his last resort as well. Under the leadership of Alp Arslan (1063–1073/455–465) and his son Melik Shāh (1073–1092/465–485), the Turks expanded their power and pushed toward Egypt. North Syria was already lost to them in 1070. The attempt to hire the services of Turkoman chieftain Atsiz b. Uvak proved to be disastrous for the Fatimids. The latter revolted against the Fatimids, occupied Jerusalem in 463/1071 and after Badr's departure, entered Damascus in 468/1077. During the same year Atsiz led a huge force to capture the Fatimid capital, but failed; he returned to Damascus, plundered the city and massacred thousands. Badr is said to have tried to bribe Atsiz by offering him a hundred and fifty thousand dinars but all he gained was some time to take care of internal order.[85]

Describing the war against the Turks as a form of *jihād*, Badr armed the people, including the Sudanese, and organized a military-popular resistance against the Turkish invasion of Egypt. After minor defeats, Atsiz was driven back leaving arms and slaves behind him. He was followed to Ramla, and finally returned to Damascus. In the year 1078/470 Badr made an attempt to recover Damascus by sending troops led by Nāṣir al-Dawla al-Juyūshī. Eventually, Melik Shāh's brother Tutush took charge in Syria as the Seljukid viceroy.[86] He

[82] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, f.s. 8a–9a, 17–19.

[83] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall of the Fatimid State*, 399. The source: Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, f.s. 7a–9a, 10–11.

[84] Ibid., 401–402.

[85] Al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, notes of the editor, 178.

[86] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 161.

liquidated Atsiz and in 1078–79/471 Damascus became the capital of the Seljukid principality in Syria and Palestine.[87]

After a hundred years of uneasy and often partial Fatimid rule, most parts of Syria were lost to the Turks. It was Tutush who refused to accept to put up with the sovereignty of Philaretus in north Syria and Antioch, and overlooking the agreement between Philaretus and Melik Shāh, he entered Antioch and several parts of the pre-Cilician Armenian state of Philaretus. Badr continued to put pressure on Tutush by fresh campaigns into Ascalon, ʿAkkā and Tyre. In the year 1089, Badr sent Nāṣir al-Dawla al-Juyūshī to al-Shām. The Fatimids recovered Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos on the coast, ʿAkkā and Baalbek were in turn occupied.[88] These coastal towns remained under Fatimid rule to the end of al-Mustanṣir's reign. Badr put down an uprising in Tyre a year before his death in 1093/486 and somehow succeeded in keeping Baalbek. Tripoli resisted to the forces of Tutush and stayed within the Fatimid caliphate. In Arabia, Seljukid expansion in Syria and claims of allegiance to the ʿAbbasid caliphate, encouraged Fatimid-held regions there to break off. In 1069–70/462, the *sharīf* of Mecca had Melik Shāh's name mentioned in the *khuṭba*. Badr recovered Mecca for a brief period (1074–1081/467–473). In the south the Ṣulayḥids of the Yemen remained loyal to the Fatimids.[89] Just a year before his death, Badr put down an uprising in Tyre, his troops captured the rebel leaders and imposed a fine of sixty thousand on the people of the town.[90]

The year 1084 is particularly important in the career of Badr and Fatimid history in general. It was during this year that his elder son al-Awḥad rebelled against his father and joined by sympathizers, he fortified himself in Alexandria. Badr entered the city, captured the rebels and was said to have drowned his son as a punishment. By the money which the inhabitants paid as fine, Badr constructed the ʿAṭṭarīn Mosque, which, according to al-Maqrīzī, was functioning up to the fall of the Fatimids to Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn. During the same year, Badr took a very peculiar initiative by proclaiming his son al-Afḍal as his heir in government ("*waliyy ʿahdihī fi'l-salṭana*").[91] It is difficult to trace a causal connection between the rebellion and violent death of

[87] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 207.
[88] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 326.
[89] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 207–208.
[90] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, vol. II, 328.
[91] Ibid., 321.

al-Awḥad and the appointment of al-Afḍal, which had no antecedent in history.

It seems that Badr had reasons to plan al-Afḍal's succession: after he died one of his Armenian *amīrs*, a *ghulām* of his known as Amīn al-Dawla Ṣāfī, whose real name was Levon, managed to get the approval of the other *amīrs* of Badr and the caliph al-Mustanṣir in particular. According to al-Maqrīzī, the latter did appoint this Levon, but another Armenian of the same background Naṣr al-Dawla Aftakīn, warned the amīrs of Levon's stinginess and pointed at the absurdity of obeying one of their colleagues ("*Khushd*", plural *khushdash*, the arabized form of Persian "*khwājadash*", i.e., colleague in service), while the sons of their "*ustādh*" Badr were alive and eligible. These Armenians faithful to their master and afraid of Levon's relatively trivial status, presented themselves to the caliph and swore to annul the vizierate of Levon. The caliph gave in, al-Afḍal was summoned and the proclamation made.[92] But a few months later, the position of Aftakīn would radically change towards al-Afḍal.

Abu'l-Qāsim al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh b. Badr al-Jamālī (1094–1121)

Badr's diligent attempts at reform and the scale of his economic, military and social achievements were not simply the work of genius; they were an integral part of his plans to monopolize power in Egypt. The post of vizier with full delegated powers amounted to providing him with the authority of an absolute military dictator. His military dictatorship in Egypt would have been similar to countless others under similar circumstances had it not been carefully designed to develop into a peculiar form of hereditary monarchy. Badr died in his eighties in June 1094/Rabīʿ I 487, and as I referred to, the Armenian officers of his Juyūshiyya forces supported al-Afḍal's succession. The latter in turn had a private force mostly of Armenians known as the *Afḍaliyya*.

Similar to Badr's fortified vizierate, al-Afḍal's hereditary vizierate was a precedent, but otherwise, al-Afḍal inherited the problems immanent in the position which his father had managed to create for himself and his heir. Badr, however, had successfully avoided the consequences of the disruption of balance between caliphal and vizieral prerogatives

[92] Ibid., 321–322.

by reestablishing the caliph in his sublime spiritual position as the Imām of all the Ismā'īlīs. Al-Afḍal's more blunt political style created pressure on the caliphate which al-Mustanṣir and his successors were incapable of withstanding. Only a few months after Badr's death, "in December 1094/Dhu'l-Ḥijja 487, Abū Tamīm Ma'add al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh, the eighth Fatimid caliph and the eighteenth imām of the Fatimid Ismā'īlīs, died in Cairo after a reign of some sixty years, during which the Fatimid Caliphate was well embarked on its way to collapse". With his death the classical period of the Fatimid Caliphate came to an end.[93]

Ambiguity surrounded al-Mustanṣir's *naṣṣ* or designation decree for the succession to the Fatimid imāmate. Of his four sons, Nizār, 'Abdallāh, Ismā'īl and Aḥmad, the eldest, Nizār (who was fifty at the time), claimed to have the written *naṣṣ*. According to some sources, al-Mustanṣir had only orally expressed his intention to designate Nizār to the notorious *dā'ī* al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 1124),[94] when the latter was in Cairo in 1086, according to al-Maqrīzī.[95] At the news of the caliph's death, the vizier al-Afḍal arranged matters with the higher state officials at the court for the proclamation of Abu'l-Qāsim Aḥmad, a younger son of al-Mustanṣir by his sister, i.e., Badr's daughter.[96] He asked the other sons to bow before the new imām caliph al-Musta'lī bi'llāh. They refused and the eldest, Nizār, when challenged to produce the written *naṣṣ*, left the palace. He fled to Alexandria where he fortified himself in this traditionally dissident city. His supporters proclaimed him caliph al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh and designated an Armenian *mamlūk* of Badr al-Jamālī[97] Nāṣir al-Dawla Aftakīn, as his vizier.[98] After a failed first attempt, al-Afḍal entered Alexandria on the second try and brought Nizār to Cairo where he died in prison.

A relatively insignificant incident involving Nizār and al-Afḍal (before he was vizier) is taken by some to be the cause of their enmity. Once, when al-Afḍal was entering "one of the palace gates mounted", Nizār shouted at him, "*Inzil yā armanī al-jins*" or "get down

[93] F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 222.
[94] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 37.
[95] Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ*, vol. II, 323.
[96] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 36–37.
[97] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 330.
[98] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 36–37.

(you) of Armenian race", as reported by al-Maqrīzī.[99] In Ibn Muyassar's earlier version, the word *jins* is "*nijis*" (impure).[100] Consequently the sentence becomes "Get down impure Armenian". Al-Afḍal's Armenian origin prompted worse insults than this, as records indicate. In any case, an incident of this nature would hardly have altered the course of events in any significant way. Even if the explicit *naṣṣ* was made public, al-Afḍal, who saw himself as the actual sovereign over a country which his father had saved from certain destruction, would not have allowed the Fatimid court to slip away from his direct control.

The hostility between Nizār and al-Afḍal, however, involves a detail of some importance. The incident mentioned above happened before al-Mustanṣir's death, and it appears that the common knowledge of the nationality of the Jamālīs, as a result of the earlier periods of Badr's office, was not an especially pleasant matter for the royal family. The Jamālīs were Muslim and it is highly uncommon to hear one Muslim call another *nijis* (if we accept Ibn Muyassar's version). Either the Islam of Badr's family and that of the community of Muslim Armenians was subject to suspicion or al-Afḍal personally had aroused such doubts through his public behaviour. Badr in turn was insulted as "wretched dog" in a clear reference to his Christian background, and al-Afḍal as "wretched son of an Armenian slave".[101] Without specifying his sources or reasons, G. Alishan believed that Badr was "half-Christian and half-Muslim".[102] He probably assumed Abū Ṣāliḥ's report of Badr's contribution to the renovation and construction of churches and his being buried in a church.

Overlooking the Fatimid tradition about of the primacy of the designation decree, as the only criterion of legitimacy, al-Afḍal raised al-Mustaʿlī, a blood relative, to the throne. His intervention caused the "greatest internal crisis of the Fatimid dynasty and revolved around

[99] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 277. Also see A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 410.

[100] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 35. The passage: "Wa qīla inna al-Mustanṣir ajlasa baʿdahu ibnahu Nizāran akbara awlādihī wa jaʿala ilayhi wilāyat al-ʿahd falammā kāna qabla an māta arāda akhdha al-bayʿa lahu fataʿahhada al-Afḍal wa dāfaʿa ḥatta māta li-karāhatihī fī Nizār wa dhalika anna Nizāran kharaja dhāta yawmin (fī hayāti abīhī) faidha li-Afḍal rākibun waqad dakhala min aḥad abwāb al-qaṣr faṣāḥa bihi Nizār 'Inzil yā armanī al-nijis', faḥaqada 'alayhī al-Afḍal".

[101] H. Sufian, *The Armenian Mamluks*, 18.

[102] G. Alishan, Introduction to Abū Ṣāliḥ's *Churches'* concise Armenian translation, 39.

the claims of al-Mustanṣir's sons Nizār and al-Mustaʿlī. The schism, as a result of which the Fatimid Ismāʿīlīs became divided into two rival wings, the Mustaʿlawiyya or Mustaʿliyya (Mustaʿlians) and the Nizāriyya, proved to have a drastic and lasting consequence for the future course of the Ismāʿīlī movement".[103]

The opposition to al-Mustaʿlī's imamate was led by al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ; the latter was said to have wanted to take over the position of *dāʿī al-duʿāt* or chief of Fatimid missionaries, but the position was already part of Badr's vizierial prerogatives. While in Cairo, Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ is believed to have been involved in the business of designating a heir to al-Mustanṣir.[104] Incapable of controlling the course of events and discouraged by Badr, Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ left Egypt first for Syria and then Alamūt. In response to al-Afḍal's choice of an heir, he declared his allegiance to Nizār as the rightful Imām, thus becoming the founder of Nizārī or Eastern Ismāʿīlism.

According to Ibn al-Qalānisī, Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ visited Alexandria and met Nizār who married his daughter. Later on, the Nizārīs claimed to have a designation by Nizār for his son Muḥammad from Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ's daughter. The Ismāʿīlī *Ḥashshāshshīn* or the Nizārī Assassins of Alamūt, issued coins in the name of the Imām al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh. In the Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg a sample of these coins is still preserved. The "reputed son of Nizār (too) is said to have struck coins as caliph in the Yemen with the title al-Imām Muḥammad b. Nizar".[105] Much later, in 1161, a man who claimed to be a son of Nizār, called Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir, arrived in Egypt from the Maghrib at the head of an army to reclaim his throne from the caliph of al-ʿĀḍid. He was eventually killed in confrontations with the forces of Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ, the last Armenian vizier.

There is a detail in the biography of caliph al-Mustaʿlī which deserves attention. If this youth was eighteen in 1094, the year he ascended to the throne, his mother, Badr's daughter, must have married al-Mustanṣir around 1075, that is, within the first year of the vizierate of Badr. The idea of enthroning his grandson may have been part of the wider plans of Badr and the Jamālīs. Al-Mustaʿlī died prematurely in 1101, at the age of twenty five, and according

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[103] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 222.
[104] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 417.
[105] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 162.

to Ibn Muyassar "it was said that he died of poisoning"[106] probably by Nizārīs. His five year old son Abū 'Alī al-Manṣūr was promptly raised to the throne by his uncle al-Afḍal, as caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh (1101–1130). Lane-Poole has an amusing image of the relation of al-Afḍal to his "master" and their subsequent career: "Al-Afḍal had a little seat made on the pommel of his own saddle and rode through Cairo with the baby caliph seated in front. The wazir's power was now absolute, and for twenty years he governed Egypt as he pleased, as his father had done before him". Indeed, adds Lane-Poole, for almost half a century, from 1074 to 1121 "these two great Armenians were, in all but name, kings of Egypt, and to their mild just rule, as much as to their energy and firm control, the country owed half a century of internal quiet and prosperity".[107] Most historians describe the situation and careers of these two Jamālīs in similar terms.[108] The monopoly of power was bound to generate antagonism and violence. In addition to al-Āmir and the religious fanatics, Abu'l-Maymūn 'Abd al-Majīd became al-Afḍal's most dangerous enemy. It was by his active participation that the assassination plot of al-Afḍal succeeded. Al-Āmir did away with the office of the vizier for the remaining years of his term in 1130, when he in turn was murdered.

There are several different versions and interpretations of al-Afḍal's assassination in the spring of 1121. Ibn Muyassar (d. 1160), who was a contemporary of al-Afḍal, believes that the caliph al-Āmir was the organizer of the plot. He reports that a Bāṭinī called al-Badī' attacked al-Afḍal while he was on his way to the palace of Dār al-Mulk. The alleged murderer was said to have been a member of the Badī'iyya sect (followers of al-Ḥurra bint al-Ṣulayḥī), twenty members of which al-Afḍal had executed.[109] Ibn al-Qalānisī in turn accused al-Āmir of assassinating his great uncle and of falsely accusing the *bāṭinīs*.[110] According to him, in the beginning al-Āmir was planning to murder

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[106] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 41.

[107] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 162.

[108] See Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 58–59. The following is a directly relevant passage: [Wa kāna min al-'adli waḥusn al-sīra fī al-rā'iyya wa al-tujjar 'alā ṣifatin jamīlatin yujāwizu mā sumi'a bihi qadīman wa shūhida akhiran walam yu'raf aḥadun ṣūdira fī zamanihi . . . wamaḥāsinuhu kathīrah wahuwa awwalu man afrada māl al-mawārīth wamana'a min akhdhi shay'in min al-tarikāt 'alā al-'ādah al-qadīmah waamara biḥafẓiha li-arbābiha].

[109] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 57.

[110] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, 323–324.

al-Afḍal in the palace, but upon the advice of his cousin Abu'l-Maymūn 'Abd al-Majīd (the future caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ) he refrained from creating a scandal in the Fatimid court. In view of the good reputation of al-Afḍal and his father for their services to the country, the murder would put him in an extremely unfavourable light. After al-Afḍal's elimination, a Fatimid Ismā'īlī figure, a certain Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. al-Baṭā'iḥī (b. 1085, a fierce man who served as one of al-Afḍal's spies in Iraq) was called upon with a promise to succeed al-Afḍal as vizier. According to Ibn al-Qalānisī, al-Baṭā'iḥī was from the beginning involved in these events motivated by his ambition and Fatimid fanaticism.[111] The whole career of al-Āmir was devoted to attempts to restore to the position of the Fatimid caliphate its past glory through the reestablishment of the rituals and related traditions. But otherwise, al-Āmir had a very bad reputation as an "ill-behaved man in the community and excessively despotic in his treatment of people", according to Ibn Muyassar. He confiscated property randomly, "shed blood indiscriminately, committed forbidden deeds and enjoyed obscenities".[112]

Al-Afḍal's internal policies proved to be successful for over 27 years; on the foreign front in Syria and Palestine, in addition to the Turkish threat he had to encounter the Crusaders. Before the arrival of the First Crusade to the Euphrates and the fall of Edessa and Antioch in 1098, al-Afḍal carried some campaigns in Palestine and parts of Syria. In 1097 he recovered Tyre from the rebel governor, and during the next year he conducted an expedition to Jerusalem, regaining it from the Turkish Artuqids, Sukman and Īlghāzī.[113] This brief recovery of Jerusalem had little military significance, but if we read al-Maqrīzī's account in the *Itti'āẓ*, the incident opens up a most obscure page in the history of Armenian involvement in the history of Syria and Palestine. "In the year 1098/491", he says, "al-Afḍal led a great army from Cairo and recovered the Holy City from the Armenians; he then returned home".[114] This is a very important record of Armenian military presence in Jerusalem prior to the arrival of the First Crusade there.

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[111] Ibid., 324.

[112] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 73. The passage: [Kāna qabīha al-sīra fī al-rā'iyya mubālighan fī ẓulmihim, waakhadha amwālahum waaghtaṣaba amlākahum, kathīra al-safki li al-dimā', yartakibu al-maḥẓurāt wayastaḥsinu al-qabā'ih].

[113] Ibid., 262–263.

[114] Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ*, vol. I, 283. See about further details in connection with Jerusalem and the holy places, Lev, *State and Society*, 41.

From early stages al-Afḍal was made aware of the imminent arrival of the Crusaders in Syria and Palestine, but his comprehension of their objectives and his policy towards them evolved slowly through bitter experiences. While the Crusaders were in Constantinople, the Emperor Alexius advised them to come to some form of understanding with the Fatimids. In general, Cairo and Constantinople enjoyed reasonably relaxed and positive relations. A first truce was signed around the year 1028 and renewed ten years later. The Franks were advised that "the Fatimids were uncompromising enemies of the Turks, they were tolerant towards their Christian subjects and had always been ready to treat with Christian powers".[115] The advice, however, could not be followed in view of the broad objectives and the interests of the Franks in the region.

Frankish-Fatimid and in general Frankish-Muslim contacts are unpopular subjects in Arab history. Information is often obtained from western sources. During the siege of Nicaea, a Frankish delegation went to Cairo with a message to the Fatimids;[116] in early 1098, "an Egyptian embassy arrived at the camp before Antioch, sent by al-Afḍal". According to Runciman, ignorant of the true intentions of the Crusades and considering the Crusaders "mercenaries of the Emperor", he may have proposed a division of the Seljuk empire. The south, that is, Palestine and south Syria, would follow the Fatimids and the north the Franks.[117]

In the story of the fall of Antioch to the Crusaders, a previously unknown Muslim Armenian military figure emerges. He is Firuz,[118] or Nairuz,[119] a captain in the government of Seljuk Yaghi-Siyan. According to Runciman, "though outwardly loyal he was jealous of his master . . . and kept in touch with his former co-religionists" (perhaps his compatriots?). Through his allies, the Armenians outside Antioch, the city was "sold" to Bohemond in a deal that remained a strict secret to the end of the operation.[120] On the second of June, at nightfall, the Armenian Firuz/Nairuz, who was in command in the Tower of Two Sisters (facing the castle of Tancred), led Bohemond's soldiers into the city. Most Muslims of the city and others

[115] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 229.
[116] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 53.
[117] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 229.
[118] Ibid., 231.
[119] G. Wiet, *Grandeur de l'Islam*, 180.
[120] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 231.

were massacred and by the evening of June 3, 1098, Antioch was in the hands of the Crusaders. Nothing more is known of this obscure figure who may have been a middle-aged man. (He had a son who acted as messenger during the negotiations with Bohemond.)[121] The Turkish governor Yaghi-Siyan, who managed to get out of the city, but fell off his horse on the way, was found and killed by Armenian peasants. His head was brought to the Franks.[122] With fewer details, G. Wiet has the same account of the fall of Antioch.[123] Michael the Syrian's reference to the "Turkish" "Qashean" and "Aghusian" who left the city after the siege (see Ch. III, n. 77) sheds some light on these stories. In the story of Michael the Syrian, one of these two "Turks" (or perhaps Muslims?) who fell off his horse, was killed by "some Armenians" and his head was taken to the Franks.[124] Despite apparent confusion of names, something can still be learned from these reports: that, judging from the words "Qashean" and "Aghusian", there were sectarian Armenians from Kashē and Aghuso along with the Seljuk Turks in Antioch. When some of them attempted to reach Muslim-held Aleppo, they were ambushed by other "orthodox" Armenians who were obviously collaborating with the Crusaders. In the same year, that is, in 1098, Bahrām was in ʿAkkā and hardly made an escape from the "infidels who wanted to kill him".[125] (See Ch. IV, n. 56.) This fragment of information, coupled with the one mentioned above on the military presence of Armenians in Jerusalem in the same year, clarifies so far obscure parts of Bahrām's whereabouts prior to his arrival in Egypt. The accounts also suggest the possibility of direct conflict between the Muslim Armenians of al-Afḍal and the "orthodox" Armenians involved in the "defense" of the Holy City. There is another intriguing piece of information about Armenian military presence in Syria half a century later: it is said that in 1149, a large group of about thirty thousand men, Armenians, Greeks and Franks, was stranded in al-Ḥarīm (east of Antioch, almost midway between Antioch and Aleppo), after Muslim orthodoxy, i.e., Sunnism, was reestablished in Aleppo by the Zangid Nūr ed-dīn.[126]

In the earlier stages of the Frankish penetration, the fall of Edessa

[121] Ibid., 233.
[122] Ibid., 234.
[123] G. Wiet, *Grandeur de l'Islam*, 178–180.
[124] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, 187.
[125] G. Wiet, *Grandeur de l'Islam*, 180.
[126] Ibid., 196.

and then Antioch were heavy disappointments for the Seljuks, though a source of some encouragement for al-Afḍal. He saw in the Crusaders a power in the face of Seljuk expansion in Syria and Palestine, only to realize very soon the futility of negotiations. As I mentioned above, he even organized expeditions to the north in 1098, and by the autumn of the same year, for a brief period recovered not only Jerusalem but the whole coast up to the Dog River north of Beirut.[127]

On the 7th of June 1099, after a long journey through coastal towns, the Frankish armies were before the walls of the Holy City. In mid-July Jerusalem fell and the brutal massacre of over seventy thousand Muslims shook the Muslim world. In a surprisingly naive move, al-Afḍal sent an embassy to Jerusalem to present a strong protest and asked the Franks to evacuate the city. Soon afterwards, he arrived in Palestine at the head of large army. On August 12, on the plain of al-Majdal, just north of Ascalon[128] the Fatimid army was almost completely destroyed, al-Afḍal barely making his escape. "The booty taken by the victors was immense"; al-Afḍal's personal arms embellished with gold and jewels, were sold at high prices.[129]

Three years later, in 1102 "the Fatimid army, composed probably of Badr's Syrian veterans, had their full revenge near Ascalon. They defeated Baldwin and seven hundred knights". This is the only explicit mention of sectarian Armenian military involvement against the Crusaders. Ramla was briefly recovered, then lost, and another battle was waged for Ramla the next year, but by 1104, most of Palestine was under Crusader control. In 1109 Tripoli fell, Tyre and Ascalon remained in Fatimid hands to the year 1124 and 1153 respectively. In 1117, Baldwin invaded Egypt and reached Tinnīs, and if it were not for his illness, events might have taken a very serious turn for the Fatimids.[130]

Al-Afḍal is often given credit for reforming the Fatimid army.[131] The initiative followed his massive defeat in Ascalon 1099.[132] According to al-Maqrīzī, al-Afḍal felt that the army betrayed him and, in

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[127] Ibid., 265. In the context of al-Afḍal's Palestinian campaign, Runciman refers to the latter's father, as "the Armenian renegade Badr al-Jamālī".

[128] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 29.

[129] Ibid., 297.

[130] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 164–165.

[131] See a summary of the divisions and ranks of the Fatimid army and administration, from S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 154–157 and Appendix V.

[132] S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 295–296.

general, that it failed to support his plans to free Palestine from the Crusaders. A poet who dared to ridicule al-Afḍal and praise the Franks was executed by al-Afḍal.[133] After this defeat, al-Afḍal put the Fatimid armies in Palestine under the command of his son (no name mentioned).[134] In addition to Abū 'Alī Aḥmad Kutayfāt Ibn al-Afḍal, another son is mentioned by al-Maqrīzī: Sharaf al-Ma'ālī b. al-Afḍal. This relatively unknown figure is said to have served both al-Musta'lī and al-Āmir, first as an assistant to his father in the wars against the Crusaders around 1103, then as vizier. He was assassinated in 1121/Ramadan 515, and within the same year, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Ma'mūn b. Fātik b. Mukhtār al-Baṭā'iḥī was appointed vizier of al-Āmir. The latter was killed four years later in 1125/Ramaḍān 519.[135] It seems, therefore, that to cover his murder of al-Afḍal, al-Āmir immediately appointed one of al-Afḍal's sons as vizier, then liquidated him and placed al-Baṭā'iḥī in the position. Other Arab sources make no mention of this vizier who was, in fact, the third vizier from the Jamālī House.

Based on Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir's reports, al-Maqrīzī says that *ḥujras* or barracks were established for the training and education (*tarbiya*) of the *shabāb*, or adolescent boys reaching puberty. The younger boys, or the *ṣibyān*, were trained in different barracks under special instructors, or *ustādhs*, and servants, or *khuddāms*, of their own. The totality of these groups formed the core of the *ḥujariyya* troops, the number of which is estimated at between three and five thousand.[136] The *ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ* had special barracks related to the palace and were trained in archery and horsemanship.[137] There seems to be some ambiguity about the exact nature of al-Afḍal's reorganization of the *ḥujras*. Two inferences can be made, however, with reasonable certainty: that a strict program of training was introduced to develop a regular army, and that instead of relying on slaves, children of free men were trained from a very early age to become professional soldiers. In this context a very important note must be made about possible roots of al-Afḍal's measures in medieval Armenian culture in general and his sectarian background in particular. The military training of men from a very

[133] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 310.
[134] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 100.
[135] Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ*, vol. I, 337–338.
[136] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 100–101.
[137] Ibid. Also see W. J. Hamblin, *The Fatimid Army during the Early Crusades*, Ph.D. dissertation (The University of Michigan, 1985), 42–47.

early age was part of Armenian medieval culture. Boys were introduced to and trained in wrestling, marshal arts, riding, archery and other military sports. The sectarians themselves were excellent archers and horsemen. Al-Afḍal's measures to reform the Fatimid army were reminiscent of Armenian customs of divisions into age groups and emphasis on free men rather than slaves.[138] One of the current terms to describe militant youth who, according to G. Aṭoyan, were pre-pubescent boys, was *mankti.* Boys reaching puberty were called *kẹtriǰ*, i.e., brave youth.[139] The Arabic equivalent of the term is *fatā*. The Armenian *kẹtriǰ*s had their organizations, known as brotherhoods, that developed into militant and rather unorthodox urban groups. Possible connections between the Islamic *Futuwwa* and *Akhī* organizations on the one hand and the Armenian Medieval Brotherhoods of the *mankẹti*s and the *kẹtriǰ*s on the other, are under study by the present author. The relation of the youth organizations and the sectarians (reminiscent of the relation of the Islamic *fityān* with the Ismāʿīlīs) is in turn part of this research in the subject. These organizations were widely spread in regions which were traditionally homelands of the Armenian sectarians, in Mananaghi, Erzenka (Arzinjan), the southern parts of the Lake Van region, Nakhijevan,[140] Transylvania, Poland, Rumania, etc.[141]

The evaluation of al-Afḍal's military reform program is beyond the scope of this study, but the attempts of both Badr and al-Afḍal reflected their basic plan to establish a secular and highly centralized military state. The creation of a professional army of free men rather than servile manpower, was a natural prerequisite. The project of the *ḥujariyya* seems to have been abandoned after al-Afḍal. Caliphs al-Āmir and al-Ḥāfiẓ had their own troops and made use of the *ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ* of the palace whenever necessary. Kutayfāt was supported by his father's loyal *Afḍaliyya* troops; vizier Yānis formed his *Yānisiyya* troops and Ṭalāʾiʿ arrived in Cairo at the head of his own troops, etc. But to the end of the Fatimids, and throughout the

[138] See G. P. Aṭoyan, *Wrestling and Military Sports.*

[139] Ibid., 142.

[140] See Kh. A. Ṗorḳshēyan, "The Associations of the Kẹtriǰs in the Villages of Nor-Nakhiǰevan" [Nor Nakhiǰevani ḥay gyugheri ketriǰneri miuṭyunneri masin kanonadruṭyune gẹrvaẓ Hovḥannēs Yerzenkatsu koghmits], *Patma-Banasirakan Handēs*, 3 (1966); also, J. K. Khachatrian, "The Associations of Age-Groups in Javakhḳ" [Hasakakitsneri miuṭyunnerẹ Javakhḳum], *Patma-Banasirakan Handēs*, 1 (1968).

[141] See G. V. Govrikian, *The Metropolis of the Armenians of Transylvania.*

frequent changes in the military situation, the Armenian element in the military maintained its presence.

A good part of Badr's term was spent in restoring what was destroyed; al-Afḍal, however, took over an already recovered kingdom that could accommodate his vision of a luxurious and culturally more refined state than that of Badr. His agrarian reforms were launched around 1107–8, probably as part of his military reforms and after he was compelled to stop military campaigns against the Crusaders. It was during these years as well that the fiscal reforms were applied too; the lunar and solar calendars were adjusted, mainly to regulate the collection of taxes (by the solar calendar) and their calculations (by the lunar calendar). The conversion or the adjustment (*taḥwīl*) having been neglected for a long time, the difference had reached four years.[142]

What interests us in these measures, is al-Afḍal's next step after the fiscal reforms. He took up the reform of the *iqṭāʿ* system where "malpractices . . . had become rampant".[143] Previous divisions were cancelled and the land redistributed. Leases and investment contracts were signed for up to thirty year terms. The reforms benefited the small land holders, who had initially presented their grievances to al-Afḍal.[144] The revenue of the country, according to al-Maqrīzī, was more than doubled during al-Afḍal's vizierate. At the hands of the amīrs and the holders of land, that is, the military *iqṭāʿ* holders, the land prospered and taxes received from the granaries increased.[145] As a result of al-Afḍal's redistribution of land and changes in the rental systems, there was an increase not only in the revenue but in the political and the military capacity of the holders of the lands. They could, theoretically at least, better participate "in important political and military actions".[146]

The complex personality of al-Afḍal, his legendary treasures[147] and his extremely lavish lifestyle have been the subject of much discussion

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[142] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 124–125.

[143] Ibid., 125. Two articles by C. Cahen are of particular interest for the subject of al-Afḍal's reforms: "L'Evolution de l'Iqṭāʿ du IX^{e} au XIII^{e} Siècles", *Annales Economiques, Sociétés, Civilizations*, 8 (1953), 25–52; "L'Administration Financière de l'Armée Fatimide d'après al-Makhzumi", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 15 (1972), 163–182.

[144] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. I, 83.

[145] Op. cit.

[146] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 163. Lev quotes from H. Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lehensregistren* (Wiesbaden, 1979), vol. I, 11.

[147] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 164–165.

among historians. Al-Afḍal was an extremely strict man in applying the law and seems to have been oversensitive towards remarks about his national background. He had a large intelligence force which also dealt with trivia. Even his shrewd and intelligent mother, Badr's wife, often spied for him disguised as a poor old woman and informed her son of public opinion. Al-Maqrīzī mentions some of these remarks made mostly by anti-Fatimid individuals: "Armenian dog", "hypocritical dog", "evil son of an evil Armenian slave", etc. Those who made errors of this nature paid with their lives but not property; al-Afḍal always made sure that inheritors received their rightful share and "no one was ever deprived of his rightful inheritance, contrary to past practice".[148]

It is possible that remarks about his Armenian origin were provoked by conspicuously Armenian behaviour on his part, though sources contain no evidence or hint of this. It is hard to tell whether in the opinion of his opponents his alleged "hypocrisy" was a cover for his nationality, his Sunnism or his rulership. Whatever the truth, the clues to his cultural personality and loyalties are to be sought in his career, lifestyle and contributions to the country and society. A more intriguing aspect of the cultural personality of al-Afḍal is his love of poetry; some of his verses have reached us through Ibn Muyassar. One of the fragments is dedicated to his *jāriya* (slave-girl) and another to his *ghulām* Tāj al-Maʿālī[149] (see Appendix VI). These lines reveal a passionate and violently jealous man. The *jāriya* lost her head because she was seen by her master looking out on the street from the roof of the house and the poem is a strange epithet he recited holding the head of the girl in his lap.

Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad Kutayfāt al-Akmal b. al-Afḍal (1131)

The relevance of the controversy surrounding al-Āmir's heir, for the purpose of the present study, lies in the manner in which the mystery was manipulated by Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad Kutayfāt al-Akmal b. al-Afḍal, the fourth and last Jamālī. According to some sources, the birth of al-Āmir's heir, Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ṭayyib was announced by the caliph himself to Ṣulayḥid queen al-Malika al-Sayyida of the Yaman. There are other accounts about a posthumously born child

[148] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, IV, 330–331.
[149] See Appendix VI for al-Afḍal's verses.

(male or female, killed or smuggled to al-Yaman, etc.). When al-Āmir died there was in effect no heir for a conveniently long period. ʿAbd al-Majīd stayed on as regent, "pending the expected delivery of al-Āmir's pregnant wife". Two favourite assistants of al-Āmir, Hazarmard or Hizabr al-Mulūk and Barghash ruled the country, keeping ʿAbd al-Majīd in a nominal position. Eventually Hizabr al-Mulūk assumed the vizierate and appointed Yānis al-Rūmī, an Armenian general in the army as the regent's chamberlain. In the meantime ʿAbd al-Majīd succeeded in making al-Āmir's heir disappear.[150]

The ambiguity that surrounded al-Āmir's heir and the brief vacuum that was created after al-Āmir's death, contributed to the intervention of al-Afḍal's son, Kutayfāt. Two weeks after al-Āmir's death, the Juyūshiyya forces, composed mostly of Armenians and loyal to the Jamālīs, raised him to the vizierate.[151] Kutayfāt was one of the few surviving members of his family, who were massacred by al-Āmir's men; he was also the fourth and last Jamālī to rise to the "throne" of his ancestors.

Kutayfāt's manner of using the vizierate as a means of absolute power was politically more sophisticated than that of the other Jamālīs. His declared adherence to Twelver Shīʿism or Imāmism, instead of Fatimid Ismāʿīlism, was not a peculiarity as such. A contemporary and compatriot, vizier Ṭalāʾiʿ b. Ruzzīk was an Imāmī also. But Kutayfāt made a very risky move to exploit both the position of the vizierate and Shīʿī doctrines in general. Based on a decree by the Fatimid chancery to the Monks of Mount Sinai (two weeks after the vizierate of Kutayfāt), Stern believes that for a short time Kutayfāt acted as vizier while ʿAbd al-Majīd was regent or "*wālī ʿahd al-muslimīn*".[152] When Kutayfāt was certain that there was no heir, he "declared the Fatimid dynasty deposed and placed the empire under the ideal sovereignty of the Expected Imām, the Mahdī of the Imāmate of the Twelver Shīʿa". The regency became superfluous. Hizabr al-Mulūk was executed, ʿAbd al-Majīd was kept in prison until the 8th of December 1131/Muḥarram 16, 526, the date of the assassination of Kutayfāt.[153]

Kutayfāt's initiative to adhere to the Expected Imām was perhaps suggested indirectly as a ruse by ʿAbd al-Majīd himself. After the

150 F. Daftary, The *Ismāʿīlīs*, 266.
151 S. M. Stern, *Fatimid Decrees*, 43.
152 Ibid., 45.
153 Ibid., 43–44.

disappearance of al-Ṭayyib (whose designation was publicly celebrated on Rabīʿ II 524/March–April 1130), "an official version put in circulation" revealed that "al-Āmir prophesied his murder, the exact disposition of power following his death and the fact that one of his women would deliver a son for whom ʿAbd al-Majīd would act as guardian". Obviously, and as Stern and Lev suggest, the author of the statement had two objectives: to nullify the succession of al-Ṭayyib and to "legitimize" the new order.[154] Subsequent events proved the involvement of al-Ḥāfiẓ from the start in the complications of al-Āmir's succession. Kutayfāt in turn used an "ingenious religious-political solution to the succession problem" and "acquired a unique position of power, ruling as a dictator responsible to no one in theory and in practice".[155]

As an Ismāʿīlī Shīʿī Badr had allowed al-Mustanṣir to play a primarily spiritual role as Imām in charge of Fatimid propaganda. This "solution" to avoid a crisis of power between the caliph-imām and the vizier had pragmatic value. Al-Afḍal explicitly worked towards the secularization of the state almost cancelling the unique religious and political significance of the imāmate. Kutayfāt removed the imāmate altogether from physical existence by proclaiming his allegiance to the Expected Imām (who in 874/260 was said to have entered a period of occultation or *ghayba*).[156] Kutayfāt's move amounted to rejecting the Fatimid claim to the imāmate, and establishing his own rule on a legitimate Shīʿī belief in the Expected rather than the Apparent Imām. It is difficult to see purely religious objectives behind Kutayfāt's measures, as the historian Surūr suggested when he argued that the military coup of Kutayfāt was an attempt to replace Fatimid Ismāʿīlism with Twelver Shīʿism or Imāmism.[157]

In the context of the events that preceded and surrounded Kutayfāt's term, reference should be made to a certain Barghash who was in the service of al-Āmir. According to the historian Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, a *ghulām* of al-Āmir, Barghash played a direct role in eliminating his master and assisting the Juyūshiyya and the Afḍaliyya forces in their military coup against ʿAbd al-Majīd. The word *barghash* (mosquito in

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[154] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 57. Also see S. M. Stern, "The Succession to the Fatimid Imām al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlism", *Oriens*, 4 (1951), 193ff.

[155] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 267.

[156] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 58.

[157] M. Surūr, *The Fatimid State in Egypt*, 120–121.

Arabic) may have been this man's nickname, but it may also be the distorted transliterated form of the Armenian name Vagharsh. Judging from his pro-Jamālī and pro-Armenian deeds (if the account of Ibn al-Qaṭṭān is true) there is a substantial possibility that this figure was an Armenian. When ʿAbd al-Majīd was acting as regent, together with Hizabr al-Mulūk, Barghash ruled, leaving the regent in a nominal position. After his colleague's appointment to the vizierate by ʿAbd al-Majīd, Barghash joined Kutayfāt and liquidated his rival, with whom relations were strained from the start.[158]

Once in a position of unprecedented power, Kutayfāt modified the Friday prayers according to his Imāmi line of Islam. Ibn Muyassar says that he omitted the mention of Imām Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq from prayers, the phrase "*ḥayy ʿalā khayr al-ʿamal*" from the *adhān* (that al-Qāʾid Jawhar had introduced to Egypt in 969 and Badr reinforced in 1074) and the name of al-Ḥāfiẓ from the *khuṭba*. Instead, he arranged a special mention of his own name as "Deputee of the Expected Imām, the Guide and Defender of the True Faith, its Followers and Administrator of the Affairs of the State, Vizier of the Sword and the Pen, Abū Aḥmad b. al-Sayyid al-Ajall al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh Amīr al-Juyūsh".[159] Perhaps to reduce the importance of Fatimid Ismāʿīlism in Egypt even more, he took the unprecedented step of appointing two Sunnī and two Shīʿī judges. The Shāfiʿī judge was al-Faqīh Sulṭān, the Mālikī was al-Lubna; one of the Shīʿī judges was an Ismāʿīlī called Abu'l-Faḍl b. al-Azraq, and the other an Imāmī known as Ibn Abī Kāmil.[160]

Kutayfāt ruled as absolute monarch and even his fanatical opponents expressed no discontentment towards his administration. The "tradition of good government was strong in his family", remarks Lane-Poole. He was "just and benevolent, tolerant and generous to the Copts, and a great lover of poetry", like his father.[161] Speaking of Kutayfāt's justice, Ibn Khallikān says that he returned to the people all that al-Āmir had confiscated from them,[162] and recovered some of what al-Āmir had looted from his father's (al-Afḍal's) treasures.

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[158] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, part from *Naẓm al-Jumān fī Akhbār al-Zamān*, (ed.) Maḥmūd Makkī (al-Rabāṭ, 1964), 185; also see H. I. Hasan, *The Rise of the Fatimid Caliphate*, 426.
[159] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, Vol. II, 75.
[160] Ibid., 74.
[161] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 167.
[162] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, vol. II, 180, and Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.

Acting as sovereign, Kutayfāt issued coins during AH 525 and 526 in the name of the Expected Imām, "al-Imām Muḥammad Abu'l-Qāsim al-Muntaẓir li Amr Allāh, and al-Imām al-Mahdī al-Qā'im bi Amr Allāh, in some of which his name appears as the Hidden Imām's representative (*nā'ib*) and deputy (*khalīfa*)".[163] Soon, however, a military coup was organized by loyal Ismā'īlīs and the Kutāma faction of the army led by Abu'l-Fatḥ Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī, the chamberlain of 'Abd al-Majīd, a military slave of al-Afḍal. Kutayfāt was murdered on the 8th of December by the *ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ* of al-Āmir,[164] when he was on his way to play polo.[165] 'Abd al-Majīd was released from prison and Yānis was appointed vizier as a reward for his role in eliminating his master's (al-Afḍal's) son.

Abu'l-Fatḥ Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī (1132)

To the end of the dynasty, the release of 'Abd al-Majīd from prison and his restoration to his previous position as regent was celebrated as the *'Īd al-Naṣr* or Feast of Victory.[166] Coins were issued in the year 1131/526 in Alexandria on which 'Abd al-Majīd's name appeared as *waliyy al-'ahd*.[167] Three months later, in February 1132/Rabī' II 526, he was proclaimed Fatimid caliph-imām al-Ḥāfiẓ li-Dīn Allāh, with the implication that he was a "guardian" for the Fatimid caliphate. The text of the proclamation (without a date) is preserved in al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*.[168] The precedent to legitimize the succession was the proclamation of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, a cousin of the Prophet, as caliph.[169] 'Abd al-Majīd was al-Mustanṣir's grandson and a cousin of al-Āmir, and although he managed to maintain his position for almost two decades, he was constantly in a weak position because of the problem of his own legitimacy.

Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī was proclaimed vizier with the same titles that had been in use since Badr's time. According to Ibn Muyassar, the *mamlūk* Yānis was a present to al-Afḍal from his original owner

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163 F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 267.
164 Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.
165 S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 167.
166 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 172.
167 A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 427.
168 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, vol. 9, 291–297.
169 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 237.

Bādīs, the grandfather of ʿAbbās, vizier of caliph al-Ẓāfir bi-Amr Allāh (1149–1154), from 1150 to 1154.[170] As soon as he felt some security in his new position, Yānis eliminated the *ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ* of the court and formed the *Yānisiyya* forces on whom he primarily relied. From then on, and in his short term of only nine months from the spring of 1132 to its end,[171] the career of Yānis followed Badr's legacy. He had the latter's *hayba*, was a strict disciplinarian and an ambitious man.[172] He was said to be a devout Ismāʿīlī Shīʿī, and constructed two small mosques.[173] The caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ could not be indifferent to the rapid growth of the power of this third (or fourth, counting Sharaf al-Maʿālī) Armenian vizier after al-Āmir's death. He arranged the assassination of Yānis by poisoning his ablution water by the court physician. Ibn Muyassar devoted several sections to the ugly incident,[174] as did al-Maqrīzī.[175] The caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ adopted the two sons of his victim. After a number of attempts to work with a vizier (Yānis, his two sons, Bahrām and Ibn Walakhshī), al-Ḥāfiẓ eventually ruled without a vizier to the end of his caliphate.

A historical reading of architectural monuments by the Armenian viziers

The Armenian contribution to Egyptian architecture started with Badr's ambitious projects of construction and reconstruction. "For the first time since the days of al-ʿAzīz (975–996/365–386)", says Lane-Poole, "Cairo became the home of architects",[176] who were of a new and different origin.

With their imposing number, ṣcale and style, Badr's architectural works present themselves as integral elements in the history of the Armenians in the Fatimid caliphate and must be taken as the record of the cultural and political legacy of the Armenians in Muslim Egypt.

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[170] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.
– To the present, the name Bādīs is a distorted transliteration of the Armenian name Avedis. Armenian historians consider this figure and ʿAbbās Armenians. ʿAbbās is mentioned as the "step-son" (F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 270) of the vizier al-ʿĀdil b. Sallār, the governor of Alexandria. From 1150–1154 he was the vizier of caliph al-Ẓāfir bi-Amr Allāh (1149–1154), a son of al-Ḥāfiẓ.

[171] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 268.

[172] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.

[173] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 268–269, vol. IV, 324.

[174] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 76.

[175] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 26–27.

[176] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 152.

In the context of studying the Juyūshī Mosque on Muqaṭṭam Hill and the walls and gates of Cairo, Creswell realizes this peculiar political dimension of an architectural subject matter and writes in a footnote that the "question of Armenians in Egypt under the Fatimids has not received the attention it deserves".[177]

Started in 1077 and continued to the end of the 1080's, the constructions of Badr comprised a number of relatively minor and partial religious constructions, for example, minarets built between 1077 and 1082; these were the Minaret of Esnā, the Minaret of Mashhad al-Baḥrī or al-Bāb, the Minaret of al-Mashhad al-Qiblī or Bilāl, the Minaret of Aswān and the Minaret of Abu'l-Hajjāj at Luxor.[178] The earliest building related to Badr's name was his first house, on Barjawān street, a modest palace that was later on called Dar al-Muẓaffar. *Qaṣr* al-Barjawān took on a unique importance when Badr built a popular commercial area around it known as the *Juyūshī Sūq*. According to al-Maqrīzī, the *sūq* extended from the Barjawān palace to the Mosque of al-Ḥākim.[179] The shops opened for the greater part of the day and night and everything from kitchenware to meat, vegetables and agricultural tools was sold there. Badr is also thought to be the author of the idea of developing broad expanses and elevated plains with greeneries known as *manāẓir*; these locations were to serve official and military purposes, like the gathering of troops, but in time, they became public parks.[180]

A personal tragedy is attached to Badr's first major construction, the 'Aṭṭarīn Mosque in Alexandria, completed in 1086. This mosque was built to commemorate his bitter victory over the rebels led by his elder son al-Awḥad.[181] To the same period belonged Badr's enigmatic work, the Mashhad on Muqaṭṭam Hill or the Juyūshī Mosque completed in the year 1085, as the inscription on the entrance shows.

It seems that the subjection of Alexandria, a traditionally and perpetually dissident Sunnī stronghold, meant the completion of his control over the country. From 1085 to 1092, Badr was involved in building the great door of the Tomb of Sitt Nafīsa, the Mashhad in Ascalon for al-Ḥusayn's head (1086/479), the Maqs Mosque, the door

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177 K. A. G. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, in 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952), vol. I, n. 209.
178 Ibid., 147–155.
179 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 155.
180 H. Ḥasan, *The History of the Fatimid State*, 534.
181 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 119.

of the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn and parts of the Mosque of al-Ḥākim.[182] The Juyūshī Mosque, and the walls and gates of Cairo were built during the same decade.

The fortifications of Cairo were initially erected by Jawhar over a hundred years earlier. These brick walls defined the Muʿizzī Cairo, which were designed to defend it against the attacks of the Qarmatian Ismāʿīlīs who were opposed to the Fatimid caliphate. *Al-Qāhira* was the space that fell within the walls. Jawhar's Qāhira was a fortress for caliph al-Muʿizz who came to Egypt as a new and dissident-Muslim power into a Sunnī society and culture. When Badr took over the vizierate, he ordered the dismantling of the old walls and the construction of new walls. While the walls Jawhar built for al-Muʿizz were primarily means for defense, what Badr created was simultaneously a military architecture (one of the few in Islamic history prior to the Crusaders)[183] and a record of the power and the glory he sought to achieve through *his* kingdom.

There is an intriguing and rather ironic aspect about these walls: the three figures involved in their building and expanding, Jawhar, Badr and Bahā' ed-dīn Karakūsh,[184] were *mamlūk*s of Christian background; the Armenian origin of one is certain while the other two were at least *rūmī*s. The three gates Bāb Zuwayla (in fact, two gates in a corner), Bab al-Futūḥ and Bāb al-Naṣr were moved by Badr to different positions and built of stone (between the years 1087–1092), by three Christian brothers from Edessa.[185] Later on the facade of the Aqmar Mosque was the work of an "Armenian Christian architect" too. The use of stone instead of brick introduced new architectural concepts into late Fatimid art and the credit for the "triumph of stone over brick"[186] goes to Badr and his national-cultural background in Upper Mesopotamia and North Syria.

Following the fall of Edessa to Seljuk Melik Shāh in 1086/479, the migrators who were mainly Armenians and Christians dispersed throughout the region. To this great exodus Creswell relates the pres-

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[182] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 401. The sources are G. Wiet's *Les Mosquées du Caire* (Paris, 1966) and other works of the same author.

[183] K. A. G. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 165.

[184] See ibid., 204, 208; G. Meṣṣerlian, *Prominent Armenians in Egypt*, 31; A. Alboyajian, *History of Armenian Emigrations*, vol. II, 466; N. T. Miḳaelian, *The Armenian Community*, 163.

[185] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, 151. For the walls and the three gates consecutively, see A. Mājid, *The Rise and Fall*, 204, 206, 208, 209–211.

[186] P. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 630.

ence and employment of the "three Christian brothers" from Edessa for the three gates of Cairo. To support this observation, he lists a number of Christian architects who came from similar backgrounds and worked on mosques and other projects in Muslim cities like Devrigui (or Tephrike), Diyarbakr, Maragha, Khlaṭ, Aleppo, etc.[187]

Creswell makes the plausible conjecture that these architects were in Cairo following events in the north and were hired by Badr. But other indications in Egyptian and Fatimid architecture (like the altar and frescos of the White Monastery) support the suggestion that Badr and Ṭalā'i' much later deliberately chose Armenian architects from among others, by the necessity of their own national background. As Creswell rightly remarks, since these fortifications were built by architects from Edessa, "we should expect to find many architectural details imported from Northern Syria and Mesopotamia (e.g., Diyarbakr, only 100 miles from Edessa). . . ."[188]

The "spherical-triangle pendentives" are such "details" that were applied for the first time in Egypt in Badr's constructions. Creswell notes that the last time they were used in the Muslim architecture of Syria, was at Qusayr 'Amra around 712 and Ḥammān al-Ṣarakh around 725. During the next three centuries, he says, we find no similar examples; but further north, and during the seventh century, the phenomenon was widely accepted and became popular in Armenia, where they were executed in cut stone. He then gives specific examples, with illustrations in a number of Armenian churches in Armenia proper: the Cathedral of Ṭalin (built before 783), the Church of St. Gregory at Goshavanḳ (985), or the Monastery of Gosha (not Kosha), the Cathedral of Ani (1010), "a ruined building forming part of a group of three at Marmashēn, which Strzygowski places c. A.D. 1000", the Church of St. Gregory at Kecharis (1033), the Church of Shoghakat in Kosha Vanḳ (c. 1038) and so on".[189]

The spherical pendentives were employed to carry the domes of the entrance-passages of Bāb al-Futūḥ, Bāb Zuwayla and the rooms on the upper parts of the towers on each side of Bāb al-Naṣr. All three examples, continues Creswell, have shallow domes and have the same curvature; "They are all beautifully cut stone, like the rest of the gateways, and each dome is closed in the centre by a single

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[187] K. A. G. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 163.
[188] Ibid., 208.
[189] Op. cit.

keystone, but, what is still more remarkable, the pendentives of the dome of the Bāb al-Futūḥ and Bāb Zuwayla exhibit the same peculiarity that we have already noticed in the early pendentives of Syria, viz. the broadening out of the top course of the pendentive towards each extremity. That this curious technique had penetrated into Armenia, may be seen by turning to the . . . pendentives at Ketsharis . . . which distinctly exhibit this peculiarity. *This detail is so remarkable that I do not hesitate to affirm that at least some Armenian [not Syrian, because the spherical-triangle pendentive had gone out of use in Syria at this time] masons must have been employed by the Armenian general Badr al-Jamali for his great works of fortification. They could have left no more convincing signature* (italics: mine). But it is possible that it was necessary actually to import them".[190] Since work on the walls and gates was begun in 1087, only a year after the fall of Edessa to the Seljuks, it is possible to assume that these skilled Armenians came to Cairo hoping to find work in a country ruled by a compatriot.

Creswell gives other examples of spherical pendentives in later works: the Aqmar Mosque (1125/519), Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's Gateway at Burj al-Ẓafar[191] built during the 1180's at a time when the *rūmī* Bahā' ed-dīn Karakūsh was in charge of constructions in Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's administration. Among other elements in late Fatimid architecture that indicate northern influences, are the decorations of the frontal arch of Bāb al-Futūḥ. "The nearest parallel that I have been able to find", says Creswell, "occurs on a capital of the Church of the Virgin (*al-ʿAdhrā'*) at Mayyāfāriqīn" believed to date from the end of the sixth century.[192] In the same region of Upper Mesopotamia and Diyarbakr, in particular, Creswell mentions another element which stands as a "bridge" between the north and Egypt; this is the small bull's head relief on the Bāb al-Futūḥ and identical forms in the east *riwāq* of the Great Mosque of Diyarbakr (1124/5).[193] Several other features of Badr's constructions of northern origin and assimilated in later Muslim architecture are also referred to by Creswell. Some of these are the square towers, masonry bonded with columns, semicircular vaults cut out of a single block, lintels with a wedge-shaped relieving block, intersecting vaults, cusion voussoirs, shields like the

[190] Ibid., 208–209.
[191] Ibid., 209.
[192] Ibid., 215.
[193] Ibid., 219.

ones on Bāb al-Naṣr, bull's heads like the ones on the brackets of Bāb al-Futūḥ, etc.

Overlooking southern Cairo, the Juyūshī Mosque or the Mashhad on the edge of Muqaṭṭam Hill has raised questions and stimulated interest. On the wall above the entrance of this rectangular construction (15×18 m) there is a marble slab with the following inscription: "This *zāwiya* (chapel, sanctuary) has been built by the servant of our lord and master the Imām al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh, by the *Amīr al-Juyūsh*". The date is April–May 1085/Muḥarram 478.[194]

The *miḥrāb* measures 3×5 meters and, according to Creswell, this "magnificent specimen of stucco ornament is the first example" of its kind since the mosque of al-Azhar built 113 years earlier by Jawhar, in 972/361.[195] The Minaret of the Juyūshī Mosque rises 20 meters above the ground. The stalactite cornice employed in this building, the "earliest existing example" in Egypt, is the most convincing evidence, in my opinion, of the fact that Badr had hired Armenian architects from Edessa prior to the fall of the city in 1086, since the next example of these decorations is found in the Minaret of Ani (the capital of the Bakratids in Armenia) built in 1073. Consequently, the Minaret of the Juyūshī Mosque is the second example, the third is found in the walls of Cairo, next comes the Bāb al-Futūḥ and finally the Mosque of al-Aqmar. "As the first two examples in Egypt", concludes Creswell, "are due to the Armenian wazir Badr al-Gamālī, and the next oldest example is in Armenia, it very much looks as if *Armenians were intermediaries whereby this Persian motif was transmitted to Egypt*" (italics: mine).[196] In the context of Persian influence it is important to mention here the *miḥrāb* (prayer niche) of the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn, known as the *Miḥrāb* of al-Afḍal Shahanshāh, built in 1094 (within the first year of his vizierate) and which is peculiar in many ways because of Persian influence in its structure and design.[197]

The Juyūshī Mosque or the *Mashhad* (sanctuary) is sometimes referred to as Badr's Tomb. About the burial place of Badr two apparently inconsistent accounts are available, one due to al-Maqrīzī, the other to Abū Ṣāliḥ. These conflicting accounts reflect the mixed cultural and religious loyalties of Badr himself. According to Abū

[194] Ibid., 160.
[195] Ibid., 155.
[196] Ibid., op. cit.
[197] Ibid., 221–222.

Ṣāliḥ, Badr was "friend to all Christians, whether high or low; he reconstructed the Armenian Church of St. James in the Basātīn district and renovated it a second time. He also completed the rebuilding of the [adjacent] church, which, however, he did not cause to be consecrated, nor was the liturgy celebrated in it. When the emir died he was buried in this church. Now the monastery [in which this church is contained] stands in the midst of gardens and plots of vegetables and cornfields; and it is reckoned among the most charming of resorts for pleasure".[198] Abū Ṣāliḥ's description of the church or the sanctuary which Badr built to be buried in perhaps makes sense if Badr really was buried there; but Badr was buried neither in a church nor in the *Mashhad* of Muqaṭṭam. The tomb of Badr is referred to five times by al-Maqrīzī. According to him, the location of the tomb is in the exterior part of Bāb al-Naṣr north of a sanctuary that was on that lot. Al-Afḍal, Kutayfāt and other members of the family were also buried there.[199] But this family tomb is obviously not the Juyūshī Mosque on Muqaṭṭam.

This structure has become the subject of considerable interest and research. Lev found the "motives behind the building of the *Mashhad al-Juyūshī*" "elusive".[200] The building is described as one of the most famous of the mausolea built in the eleventh century. Just as the size and grandeur of this monument matched the ambition and achievements of Badr, its shape witnessed the complexity of the cultural personality of its author. The *Mashhad* played another major cultural role. It introduced the "practice of associating a tomb, usually of the founder, with a mosque".[201] The practice was very common in Armenian cultural-religious tradition, but novel in Islamic culture. What better way could a militant-religious culture like that of the Armenian sectarians find to synthesize power with immortality than a religious structure that sits in glory on the *acropolis* of Cairo?

Two relatively recent articles by Yūsuf Rāghib resolve many of the puzzles surrounding this peculiar structure.[202] Ordinarily, says

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[198] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, ff. 98a–98b, 270–271.

[199] The following are the references for Badr's tomb in al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*: vol. II, 184; vol. III, 34; vol. III, 179; vol. III, 225; vol. IV, 348.

[200] Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 151.

[201] P. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 630.

[202] Two articles by Yūsuf Rāghib, "Une Oratoire Fatimide au Sommet de Muqaṭṭam", *Studia Islamica*, LXV (1957), 51–67; "Sur un Groupe de Musolées du Cimetière du Caire", *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 40 (1972), 189–195.

Rāghib, the term *mashhad* has funerary connotations and this edifice has been accepted as a "martyrium". The term can be taken to mean both a "place of martyrdom" and a "gathering place".[203] He then traces the origin of the application of the term to north Syria, incidentally, where Badr came from. The word appears in an epigraph inscribed around the middle of the ninth century in the Citadel of Salamiyya, a purely Ismāʿīlī town between Ḥims and Ḥamā; there is reference to a "*mashhad* built by a certain Abu'l-Faraj ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. . . . ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad, but no mention is made of any tomb".[204]

The second instance in which the term is used brings us closer to the background of Badr in Aleppo. The word appears on the mausoleum of a grandson of ʿAlī al-Maḥāssin, and is built by the Amīr Sayf al-Dawla al-Ḥamdānī in 962/351. By the late tenth century the term was applied to locations quite different from the initial ʿAlid mausolea and sanctuaries, such as venerated locations as caves, springs, etc. A *mashhad*, however, is always a form of sanctuary, a prayer-gathering place which may also contain a tomb.[205] Rāghib is of the view that in addition to other indications, the various Qur'ānic verses inscribed in the Juyūshī Mosque-*mashhad* are not indicative of a tomb or burial place, but of success and victory, or "*fatḥ*".[206]

This observation would have solved the ambiguities surrounding this structure, if it were not for the existence of other similar structures around it on Muqaṭṭam Hill. The reason for the confusion, even the inscription on the entrance, is because of the existence of an adjacent little convent or habitat of a certain unknown figure called Sīdī ʿAbd Allāh al-Juyūshī.[207] Where this ʿAlid-Ṣūfī figure stayed may have become part of a sanctuary by the fifteenth century; hence the source of the appellation of the structure as a *mashhad* rather than just a commemorative mosque. Rāghib believes that it was just one of the commemorative chapels that became common in the late Fatimid period. The historical accident which raised the building to a sanctuary, he sees as the factor in its preservation.[208]

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[203] Y. Rāghib, "Une Oratoire Fatimide", 55.
[204] Ibid., 55–56.
[205] Ibid., 56–57.
[206] Ibid., 60.
[207] Ibid., 64.
[208] Ibid., 65–66. The source is E. M. Sartan, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Cambridge, 1975).

Two mosques are mentioned as al-Afḍal's constructions: the *Fiyāla* Mosque (Elephants' Mosque, for the shape and number of its domes that from a distance gave the structure the impression of an elephant herd)[209] and *Raṣd* Mosque (Observatory Mosque).[210] The *miḥrāb* at the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn (1094) is perhaps the most original of al-Afḍal's works. He has also ordered the construction of the *Mashhad* at Aswān (1098–1100) and the *Masjid* Kheḍra Sharīfa (1107/8).[211]

His palaces, summer resorts, exotic gardens, artificial lakes, irrigation canals, drinking halls and treasures put al-Afḍal in a Thousand-and-One-Nights context. "The prosperity which the country enjoyed under the two caliphs (i.e., al-Mu'izz and al-'Azīz 973–996) and later under the two viziers of Armenian origin (i.e., Badr and al-Afḍal 1074–1121), a prosperity worthy of the Pharaonic or Alexandrian age, was reflected in the sphere of art" and manners of living, one may add to Ḥitti's remark.[212] Al-Afḍal is famous for his lavish palaces in particular. Some of these were *Dār al-Dhahab* (or Gold Palace),[213] *Dār al-Ḍiyāfa* (or Guest House, that is, basically Badr's first palace on Barjawān street),[214] *Dār al-Qibāb* (Palace of Domes), *Dār al-Wizāra al-Kubrā* (or the Great Ministerial Palace),[215] *Dār al-Mulk* (Palace of Lordship),[216] al-Afḍal's last residence, where he moved all the government records. Al-Afḍal is given special credit for cultivating exotic gardens, nature resorts, or *manẓaras*; Al-Maqrīzī mentions *Manẓarat al-Ba'l, al-Tāj* and *al-Khams Wujūh.*[217] The large irrigation project known as *Baḥr Abī al-Munājja* was al-Afḍal's contribution to the agricultural sector.[218] The treasures of the Shāhanshāh, as he liked to be called, have become the subject of long descriptions.[219]

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[209] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 74.
[210] Ibid., 321.
[211] K. A. G. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 221.
[212] P. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 630.
[213] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 102.
[214] Ibid., vol. II, 338.
[215] Ibid., 301–303.
[216] Ibid., 374–375.
[217] Ibid., 370–371.
[218] Ibid., 381.
[219] For al-Afḍal's treasures see: al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. I, 483–484; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. II, 451; Ibn Khallikān's *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. I, 614; The Armenian translation of Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt* (Cairo, 1935), 150; Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 57–59; H. I. Ḥasan, *The Fatimid State*, 557–558; H. I. Ḥasan, *The Fatimids in Egypt* (Bulaq, 1933); 241–242; A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 422–423; G. Mẹssẹrlian, *Prominent Armenians*, 41–47; S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 165–166.

After plotting his assassination and the elimination of the whole family, his protégé, caliph al-Āmir, required two months (according to al-Maqrīzī and other sources) to transport his benefactor's and victim's treasures to the royal palace.

Vizier Yānis managed to leave two mosques in his name: *Masjid Yānis* outside the Gate of Saʿādeh, that, according to al-Maqrīzī, was completed by his sons after his assassination arranged by al-Ḥāfiẓ,[220] and *Masjid al-Fatḥ* (or Victory Mosque).[221]

[220] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 268–269.
[221] Ibid., 324.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NUṢAYRĪ BANŪ RUZZĪK AND THE END OF ARMENIAN VIZIERIAL RULE IN EGYPT

Abu'l-Ghārāt Fāris al-Muslimīn Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk—"poetic" testimonies

"The last time a vizier was appointed by a Fatimid caliph" was when Ibn Maṣāl became vizier to the sixteen year old caliph al-Ẓāfir, the youngest son of al-Ḥāfiẓ.[1] The next vizier was the governor of Alexandria, 'Ādil b. al-Sallār who seized power in 1150 with an additional title of "al-Malik al-'Ādil". After his death in 1153, his step-son 'Abbās al-Ṣanhājī imposed his vizierate upon the caliph al-Ẓāfir. In April 1154/16 Muḥarram 549, the twenty-one year old caliph was murdered in obscure circumstances by 'Abbās and his son, who then assassinated the caliph's two brothers accusing them of the murder. Amidst great confusion and violence, 'Īsā, the five year old son of al-Ẓāfir was proclaimed caliph al-Fā'iz bi-Naṣr Allāh (1154–1160).[2]

These events and the indignation of the populace drove the ladies of the royal household and al-Ẓāfir's sister in particular, Sitt al-Quṣūr, to appeal for help from the governor of Ushmunayn, Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk (b. 1101/2).[3] 'Abbās fled to Syria where he was killed with some help from the royal family. His son Naṣr was returned in an iron cage. After being tortured by the female relatives of the caliph, he was crucified alive on the Zuwayla Gate in Cairo.[4]

On the 16th of April 1154/Muḥarram 549 at the head of a large force, Ṭalā'i' entered Cairo dressed up in black, at the head of a large force, raising black flags of mourning; the spears of his soldiers

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[1] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 171–172.

[2] Ibid., 172.

[3] See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III; 90, vol. IV, 81–83; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. II, 528.

[4] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. V, 311. Both editors of Ṭalā'i''s *Dīwān*, A. A. Badawī and M. H. al-Amīnī, relate that Naṣr's body was left on the cross to the feast of 'Āshūrā' of the year 1156/551. His remains were burnt later on. See Aḥmad A. Badawī, Introduction to *Dīwān al-Wazīr Ṭalā'i' al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ*, (Cairo, Maktabat Nahḍa, 1958), 5; Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalā'i' Ibn Ruzzīk*, Muḥammad Hādī al-Amīnī, (Al-Maktaba al-Ahliyya, al-Najaf, 1964), 24.

carried locks of hair that the ladies of the royal family had sent him,[5] (as "the strongest possible sign of entreaty in a *muslima*" or a Muslim woman).[6] These black flags were seen as the omens of the return of the 'Abbasids after seventeen years through the Ayyūbids.[7] Ṭalā'i' ruthlessly put an end to civil strife and anarchy and gave a proper funeral to the assassinated caliph al-Ẓāfir, whose body was thrown into a well. He carried the coffin with the mourners barefooted and bareheaded.[8]

Two documents written by the head of the palace secretariat, Abū Ḥajjāj Yūsuf b. Muḥammad (known as Ibn al-Khallāl) are preserved concerning the proclamation of Ṭalā'i' as vizier.[9] One of these (issued on the 14th Rabī' I 549) is a statement of his titles, unprecedented in length and scope. Since then Ṭalā'i' was recognized as *al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ*, an additional title he was granted.[10] He was also referred to as *al-Sulṭān*, meaning sovereign, as 'Azīz al-Dawla, al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh and others were too. By the other document of proclamation (issued on the 16th of Rabī' II 549), Ṭalā'i' was proclaimed vizier with absolute military, judicial and civil-administrative powers.[11]

Abu'l-Ghārāt Fāris al-Muslimīn Nāṣir ed-dīn Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk was an Armenian, according to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, al-Ṣafadī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Dhahabī and others.[12] H. Derenbourg says that Ṭalā'i' was called

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[5] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 293.

[6] S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 173.

[7] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 30. Also see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-Ta'rīkh*, vol. XI (Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1979), 193–194.

[8] M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān al-Ṭalā'i'*, 24. See Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. V, 293; Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 94.

[9] For both texts see M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalā'i' Ibn Ruzzīk*, 13–22; Ḥasan al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara fī Akhbār Miṣr wa'l Qāhira*, vol. II (Cairo, 1909), 118–123.

[10] See M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalā'i'*, 23. Ṭalā'i''s titles were: al-Sayyid al-Ajall, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, Nāṣir al-A'imma, Kāshif al-Ghimma, Amīr al-Juyūsh, Sayf al-Islām, Ghiyāth al-Anām, Kāfil Quḍāt al-Muslimīn, Hādī Du'āt al-Mu'minīn, Abu'l-Ghārāt Ṭalā'i' Ibn Ruzzīk al-Fā'izī.

[11] Ibid., 13–22.

[12] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. V (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992), 328, the passage: "al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk, wa-kinyatuhu Abu'l-Ghārāt, al-armanī al-aṣl".

– al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī b'il-Wafayāt*, vol. XVI (Stuttgart, 1991), 503, the phrase: "al-armanī thumma al-maṣrī al-shī'ī".

– Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-Ta'rīkh*, vol. XI (Beirut, 1979), 274, the phrase: "al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Abu'l-Ghārāt Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk al-Armanī".

– Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām wa-Wafayāt al-Mashāhīr wa'l-A'lām*, (ed.) 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī, (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1995), 197, the phrase: "Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk . . . al-armanī, thumma al-maṣrī, al-shī'ī".

"*Fāris al-Dīn*" (knight of religion) because "this Armenian of base origin was not a Christian".[13] Eighty years after Badr's appearance, the arrival of another Muslim Armenian military figure from the north on the Fatimid stage marked a developed stage in the history of Muslim Armenians. Born in 1101/2 in a family of good financial and social status, Ṭalā'i' was from Persian Armenia, which was the region that spread from the southeastern shores of Lake Van to Lake Urmia. His birthplace is described as a "very prosperous" city surrounded by fruit orchards, and it lay at a distance of about "five miles from the shores of Urmia, three days from Tavriz and seven days from Dvin". According to the same source, the city was thought to be the birthplace of Zarathustra, the "prophet of the *majūs*".[14] According to legend, the latter was born somewhere in what is called modern Adharbayjan.

Since the fifth century these regions south of Armenia and north Persia were a haven for Armenian sectarians who eventually converted to Islam or simply collaborated with the local Muslims. But the case of the Muslim Armenian Ruzzīk Clan or the *Banū Ruzzīk* is the first explicit indication of the formation of such communities. It also suggests links between such clans and the Persian-speaking Shī'ī "*tajiks*" against whom the polemical treatise of Grigor of Tatev was written in 1396. It is reasonable to assume that the "*tajiks*" were in fact Armenian converts to a sub-Shī'ī sect and indeed the Banū Ruzzīk were Nuṣayrīs. (In medieval Armenian, the terms "*tajik*" and "*rajik*" were synonyms. Can one make the remark that the "*Ruzzīks*" were in fact "*tajiks*" or "Muslims"?) The sectarian refugees gradually came to embrace the doctrines of the Alewī sects, to which they also contributed, like the Truth Worshippers, or the Ahl-i Ḥaqq, or Alī Ilāhīs, who were very closely connected (if not identified) with the Nuṣayrīs, the Yezīdīs and the Qizilbashs.[15]

Growing interest in religion and the adoration of 'Alī led young Ṭalā'i' away from his native province to seek the company of the ascetic and vagrant groups in tribal areas. Love of discourse in defense of Imāmism and theories of predestination (*qadar*), motivated him to withdraw from all worldly affairs and to indulge in the study of theol-

[13] Hartwig Derenbourg, *'Oumāra du Yemen*, vol. II, (Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1904), 133, 5 n.

[14] M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalā'i'*, 5, 1 n.

[15] See W. Ivanow, *The Truth Worshippers of Kurdistan*, 51; The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Supplement (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1938), 1–13.

ogy and Islamic Law or the *Sharīʿa*.[16] Ṭalāʾiʿ's political career in Fatimid Egypt has often been connected to an extraordinary event which, according to his biographers, happened during his first pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib in Najaf with forty other "*faqīrs*" or poor folk (also ascetic?). The Imām of this sanctuary at the time was a man called al-Sayyid Ibn Maʿṣūm. As Ṭalāʾiʿ and his fellow pilgrims were lodging there, the Prophet ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib appeared in a dream to Ibn Maʿṣūm and told him that among the forty *faqīrs* there was one called Ṭalāʾiʿ Ibn Ruzzīk whom he considered one of his most ardent followers. "Tell him, the Prophet ʿAlī asked Ibn Maʿṣūm, to proceed to Egypt for we have decreed that he should rule there". Following the oracle, Ṭalāʾiʿ left for Egypt and indeed eventually "ruled" over the country.[17] This is the cultural background of Ṭalāʾiʿ and the "spiritual" justification of his rule in Egypt.

Nothing is known of the whereabouts of Ṭalāʾiʿ and the Banū Ruzzīk between the time they were still in the north and their arrival in Egypt. The first time we read about Ṭalāʾiʿ is when the Syrian poet from Shayzar, Usāma b. Munqidh refers to their friendship which started since his arrival in Cairo in 1144. Ṭalāʾiʿ may have gone there with his clan, the Banū Ruzzīk, or invited them soon afterwards. Because, from the start, the Imāmī Banū Ruzzīk ruled as a team; they were all Nuṣayrīs, that is, radical dissident Shīʿīs or *Imāmī-Rāfiḍīs*. Al-Maqrīzī alludes to Ṭalāʾiʿ's Nuṣayrism when he mentions that in addition to the holy places in Mecca and Medina, Ṭalāʾiʿ used to make generous donations to the Alewīs of the various sanctuaries.[18] An ardent defender of predestination and determinism, Ṭalāʾiʿ was said to have powers of foresight into the future (or "seeing fortunes", "*kāna yara al-qadar*", as al-Dhahabī says).[19] Like his ascent to power, his death too was communicated to him: it is told that on the seventeenth of Ramaḍān, which coincided with the anniversary of the death of the Prophet ʿAlī, he performed a ceremonial prayer, and as he was mounting his horse to leave for the royal palace, his turban fell and was entangled. Despite warnings of immanent danger which this omen was interpreted as signalling, he proceeded to the royal palace where he was fatally assaulted that same night and died the next

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[16] M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalāʾiʿ*, 5–7.

[17] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 81–82; M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalāʾiʿ*, 8–9.

[18] Ibid., 82–83.

[19] al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 198.

day.[20] His eulogist and close friend, the poet ʿUmāra al-Yamānī tells that three days before his death, Ṭalāʾiʿ showed him two verses he had written in anticipation of his end.[21] In general, ʿUmāra's literature and his *Chronicles and the Times of the Egyptian Viziers* (*al-Nukat al-ʿAṣriyyah fī Akhbār al-Wuzarāʾ al-Miṣriyyah*), are irreplaceable sources not only for Ṭalāʾiʿ's life and career but for many figures of the period as well. The poet Usāma b. Munqidh, a friend of Ṭalāʾiʿ, is another source on his biography.

In ʿUmāra's *al-Nukat* we find the most explicit statements about the Nuṣayrism of the Banū Ruzzīk. A close associate and friend of the Ruzzīks, al-Amīr Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Zubd was a radical Nuṣayrī fanatic too. In his unconditional faithfulness to the Banū Ruzzīk, explains ʿUmāra, ʿAlī b. al-Zubd (perhaps unwittingly) became an "ardent follower of the sect (*madhhab*) of the Banū Ruzzīk too, who were Nuṣayrī in their loyalties and doctrines".[22] On the day of the assassination of Ṭalāʾiʿ, in one of the corridors of the "Gold Hall" (*Qāʿat al-Dhahab*), Ibn al-Zubd struggled to defend his master; after his sword was broken, he threw himself on the wounded body of Ṭalāʾiʿ to shield him against the blows.[23]

As any fanatical Nuṣayrī or sectarian, Ṭalāʾiʿ had missionary objectives. ʿUmāra was once told that Ṭalāʾiʿ and the Banū Ruzzīk intended to convert him to the Nuṣayrī sect and that these motives lay behind their excessive generosity towards him. However, as the poet explains, his dignity, "deep rooted conviction" and knowledge of Sunnī Islam (since he was a theologian and a *qāḍī*, or an Islamic judge) prevented him from being tempted. Eventually Ṭalāʾiʿ gave up attempts to convert his most eloquent admirer. Some verses, however, have reached us written in a missionary spirit and addressed to ʿUmāra.[24]

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[20] For Ṭalāʾiʿ's term and tragic end see al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 81–83; H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumâra*, vol. II, 161–162).

[21] Al-Yamānī, Najm ed-dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿUmāra b. Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ḥakamī, *Kitāb al-Nukat al-ʿAṣriyyah fī Akhbār al-Wuzarāʾ al-Miṣriyyah*, (ed.) H. Derenbourg, vol. I (Paris, E. Leroux, 1898), 48–49. For the translation see H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumâra*, 160. These verses are: "Naḥnu fī ghaflatin wa nawmin, wa'l-mawtu ʿuyūnun yaqẓanatu lā tanāmu/qad raḥalna ilā al-ḥimāmi sinīnan, layta shiʿrī matā yakūnu al-ḥimamu".

[22] See H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumâra*, vol. II. 165; ʿUmāra al-Yamānī, *al-Nukat*, 144–145. The passage about ʿAlī b. al-Zubd: ". . . kāna al-madhkūru min al-ghulāt al-mutaghālīn fī madhabihī min ghayri ʿilmin wa kāna fī al-wafāʾi li-Banī Ruzzīk nuṣayrī al-muwalāt wa'l-ʿaqīdah".

[23] ʿUmāra, *al-Nukat*, 145; H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumâra*, vol. II, 165.

[24] Ibid., 126–127; A. A. Badawī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalāʾiʿ*, 7. See Appendix VI, group 7.

Ibn al-Athīr referred to him as "Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk *al-armanī*, the *'alawī* vizier of al-'Āḍid, the ruler (*ṣāḥib*) of Egypt". In another context he wrote: "al-Ṣāliḥ was an Imāmī but in his beliefs he was different from the sect of the Egyptian Alewīs". As such, obviously Ṭalā'i' did not take seriously the Fatimid doctrine of imāmate and the importance of the succession to the position. He is said to have dismissed as sheer "ignorance" the celebrations of the people of Cairo on the occasion of the proclamation of al-'Āḍid as the new caliph-imām. The choice lay completely in his hands and no symbolism could be attached to the succession. Ibn al-Athīr reports him as saying that "those ignorants fail to see that only a while ago I was inspecting (the possible candidates for the caliphate) as one chooses a sheep from the herd".[25]

The Nuṣayrīs—so named after their theologian Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr Nāmirī 'Abdī—were basically an extreme Shī'ī sect found to the east of the Euphrates and Egypt.[26] Similarities of doctrines with the Sun Worshippers or the *Shamsiyya* suggest the possibility of links between them and the Armenian *Arevordiḳ* in Syria during the twelfth century. Matthew of Edessa and Ibn al-Qalānisī referred to such active groups, the former around the year 1125 in Membij (northeast of Aleppo) and the latter in 1160 in Damascus.[27]

With the exception of al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, who was said to have had some Sunnī sympathies, all Muslim Armenians we know about were Shī'īs and the sectarian Shī'ism of Ṭalā'i' was not an exception. There is a possibility that 'Azīz al-Dawla of Aleppo had Nuṣayrī sympathies too. According to an officer in his service, al-Qā'id Abū Khayr al-Mufaḍḍal b. Sa'īd al-'Azīzī (who wrote a eulogy addressed to him during the term of his master), great festivities and fireworks were held on Christmas eve ("*laylat al-mīlād*") in the citadel of Aleppo. Among the Muslim sects, the Nuṣayrīs considered Christmas as one of their feasts. Al-Maqrīzī described him as a "pious" man, perhaps indicating his excessive religious zeal.[28] At any rate very little is known

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[25] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-Ta'rīkh*, vol. XI, 274–275. The last passage: "... wa kān al-Ṣāliḥ imāmiyyan lam yakun 'alā madhhab al-'alawiyyīn al-miṣriyyīn, wa lamma wallā al-'Āḍid al-khilāfah, rakiba sam'a al-Ṣāliḥ ḍajjatun 'aẓīmah, faqāla 'mā al-khabar?', faqīla 'innahum yafraḥūna bi'l-khalīfah', faqāla 'ka'anna bihā'ulā' al-juhalā' wa hum yaqūlūn mā māta al-awwalu ḥatta istakhlafa hādha, wa mā 'alimū innanī kuntu min sā'atin asta'riḍuhum isti'raḍa al-ghanami'".

[26] Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1961), 453.

[27] See Ch. III, n.s. 86 and 88.

[28] See the Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 455; al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ*, II, 129.

about the true faith of ʿAzīz al-Dawla, but celebrating Christmas was not an indication of Sunnī or Shīʿī orthodoxy. The Nuṣayrīs flourished during the reign of the Ḥamdānids of Aleppo during the early years of the eleventh century and dispersed after the Mirdāsids took over.

Whatever their religious inclinations, the Armenian sectarians in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria allied themselves with the Muslim forces against the Crusaders. At the time of the First Crusade, they joined the Seljuk Turks who happened to be there. The Banū Ruzzīk and other Nuṣayrī clans, like Banū Muḥriz, Banū Ṣulayḥa and Banū ʿAmrūn, also fought against the Crusaders.[29] The profound hatred and enmity Ṭalāʾiʿ held against the Crusaders, his few attempts to recover lost Fatimid territories, his correspondence and relatively good relations with Nūr ed-dīn and the Zangīs in general, give reasons to believe that the clan had some history in north Syria before moving to Egypt. Clan and sect were closely connected in medieval society and the Banū Ruzzīk were a common example.

We know of five members of the Banū Ruzzīk who were part of the administration of Ṭalāʾiʿ: his two sons Majd al-Islām Abū Shujāʿ Ruzzīk (future vizier of al-ʿĀḍid, known as al-Malik al-ʿĀdil) and Jalāl al-Islām, his brother al-Amīr Fāris al-Muslimīn Badr b. Ruzzīk, Sayf ed-dīn al-Ḥusayn, who was his nephew (brother's son) and son-in-law,[30] and ʿIzz ed-dīn Ḥusām, another nephew (his sister's son). A son of al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, al-Amīr Ṣubḥ al-Mufaḍḍal, was closely associated with and related to the Banū Ruzzīk; he was an officer in the Barqiyya troops and had a palace in their district. Ṣubḥ married a daughter of Sayf ed-dīn al-Ḥusayn, the son-in-law of Ṭalāʾiʿ. In other words, Ṣubḥ's wife was Ṭalāʾiʿ's granddaughter,[31] or by a coincidence, a grandson of Badr married a granddaughter of Ṭalāʾiʿ. When Dirghām liquidated the Barqiyya officers, Ṣubḥ was among the victims along with al-Ṭāhir Murtafiʿ, ʿAlī b. al-Zubd, Asad al-Ghāwī, etc. Ṭalāʾiʿ devoted some verses to his clan.[32]

The Banū Ruzzīk were not the only Muslim Armenian clan; as mentioned in the introduction, Michael the Syrian speaks of another clan, which he calls the "Bene Bogousag". These Muslim Armenians

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[29] Claude Cahen, "Notes sur les Origines de la Communauté Syrienne des Nuṣayrīs", *Revue des Études Islamiques*, XXXVIII/2, 1970, 247.
[30] H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumāra*, vol. II, 93, 3 n.
[31] Ibid., 106–107, n. 7.
[32] Ibid., 286. See Appendix VI, group 11.

were the "masters of Siberek", that is, the territories between Edessa and Amid.[33] Like the Banū Ruzzīk, the Banū Bogousag fought against the Crusaders and took part in the siege of Edessa in 1144 by the Zangid Turks. The closeness of the dates between the activity of the two clans and their political and military alliance with the local Muslim forces against the Crusaders, suggest the possibility of other militant Muslim Armenian clans and factions there at the time. In general, the phenomenon of Muslim Armenian clans and their careers reveal so far unknown aspects in the history of medieval Armenian sects during the twelfth century.

Sectarian militarism and religious zeal were best embodied in the personality of Ṭalā'iʿ. Al-Dhahabī, who described Ṭalā'iʿ as "the Armenian, the Egyptian, the Shīʿī and *rāfiḍī*",[34] remarked that his fanatical attachment to his "ill sect" ("*su' madhhab*") was reflected in his poetry. "He was like a hot iron bar" in propagating his faith. He gathered theologians and scholars of all the religious denominations and preached his doctrines to them. He also wrote a polemical-apologetic work in which he expounded the bases and principles of dissident Islam ("*qawāʿid al-rafḍ*"). The book was called *Treatise in Reply to the Stubborn* (*al-Ijtihād*—according to al-Dhahabī, or "*al-Iʿtimād fi'l-Radd ʿalā Ahl al-ʿInād*").[35]

Ṭalā'iʿ's radical Alewī allegiance and his political career constituted a unity which found expression in his poetry. Clues to his political personality are often found in his poems, most of which are lost. Ibn Khallikān reported seeing two volumes of his verses "on all matters and issues". What is left is gathered from scattered sources.[36] Ṭalā'iʿ saw his political career as an extension and translation of his devotion to the legacy of the Prophet ʿAlī and his "Pure Family" ("*al-ʿitra al-ṭāhira*"). A great number of verses are in praise of ʿAlī and his mystical attachment to the defense of radical Imāmism.[37] To this category of verses also belong his more theoretical lines about Islam, corruption among followers of the same faith and the origin of sects as a

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[33] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, Vol. III, 247. See my Ch. III, n. 12.

[34] Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 197.

[35] See al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 198; A. A. Badawī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalā'iʿ*, 23, where he refers to the book as *al-I'timād fi'l-radd ʿalā ahl al-ʿinād*. I have not been able to trace this book, it seems that there is some information about it in Sheikh ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī, *al-Kuna wa'l-Alqāb*, al-Najaf, (?), vol. II, 172, see M. H. al-Amīnī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalā'iʿ*, 38.

[36] A. A. Badawī, Introduction to *Dīwān*, 15.

[37] See Appendix VI, groups 4, 5.

consequence.[38] At least ideally, holy war or *jihād* against the Crusaders was presented as the focus of Ṭalā'i''s career. Well aware of the fact that his military victories were ineffective as limited operations, he sent versified messages to Nūr ed-dīn Zangī through his friend and admirer the poet Usāma or al-Amīr Mu'ayyid al-Dawla Abū Muẓaffar Usāma b. Murshid al-Kinānī al-Shayzarī (1095–1188). The record of this correspondence is found in the *dīwāns* (collection of poems) of both figures. Ṭalā'i' wrote love poems dedicated mostly to youths,[39] and many aphoristic verses with ascetic-moralistic content. His autoportrait and references to his clan, the Banū Ruzzīk, have also found poetic expression.[40]

Ṭalā'i' was a very strict and cruel man. He restored some internal order to the country, and avenged the enemies of the caliphate. His heavy taxation policy on the peasantry, his monopoly over the state resources and deprivation of the amīrs of all benefits, and, above all, his severity in dealing with the royal family created discontentment. In 1159, rebel factions led by the Ghuzz Bahrām—who was a rival for the position of the vizierate—and a certain schismatic figure known as Yūsuf al-Khārijī attempted to create an independent principality in al-Ṣa'īd, south of Cairo and north of Upper Egypt.[41] Troops were sent there led by Ṭalā'i''s son Majd al-Islām Abū Shujā' Ruzzīk and an army general named Fāris al-Muslimīn Shams al-Khilāfa Abu'l-Ashbāl Dirghām. Bahrām's brother and many others from the Ghuzz rebels were massacred and the rebellion crushed.[42]

General amnesty was granted to the rebels, but two years later in September 1161, Bahrām organized another rebellion, which was crushed by Ṭalā'i''s brother, Fāris al-Muslimīn al-Amīr Badr b. Ruzzīk. Bahrām was crucified and Yūsuf al-Khārijī decapitated.[43] About the same time of Bahrām's first revolt in 1159, Ṭalā'i' was challenged by the governor of Alexandria 'Izz ed-dīn Tarkhān Salīṭ who was originally from Khurasan. Troops were sent under the command of Sayf ed-dīn al-Ḥusayn, Badr b. Ruzzīk, 'Izz ed-dīn Ḥusām and Tāj al-Khilāfa Ward al-Mukarram, a *ghulām* of Ṭalā'i'.[44] The provinces of the

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[38] See Ibid., group 6.
[39] See Ibid., groups 1–3.
[40] See Appendix VI, groups 1, 2, 3.
[41] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 126.
[42] Ibid., 127. Also see 'Umāra's account, *al-Nukat*, 46.
[43] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 128.
[44] 'Umāra al-Yamānī, *al-Nukat*, 113.

Gharbiyya and the Buḥayra were recovered and Tarkhān executed. By the year 1161 Ṭalā'iʿ, who was so active between 1154 and 1159, was reluctant to leave his residence and literary circle in Cairo.[45]

The foreign and military policies of the Banū Ruzzīk concentrated on keeping the Crusaders out of Egypt. Before their arrival to power, Ascalon was lost to the Crusaders in 1053; in 1156 Ṭalā'iʿ led two expeditions to Ghazza and Ascalon; and in 1158 his general Dirghām carried out a successful campaign against the Crusaders in Ghazza and Hebron.[46] During the same year, realizing the impossibility of the task of forcing the Frankish forces out of the region and the urgent need for a collective strategy with the Seljuks, Ṭalā'iʿ sent repeated messages to Nūr ed-dīn proposing a military alliance. He undertook to reconcile the latter with Gilj Arslan, inviting them to unite against the "infidels" on Muslim land.[47] Many verses were sent to his friend Usāma, who was in the service of Nūr ed-dīn at the time. "Pigs and evil spirits" have landed in the Holy City, he wrote in one these poetic messages. If Christ, to whom they claim to serve, were to see their deeds, he would denounce these people who are the farthest removed from the worship of their crucified Lord.[48]

In Damascus, Nūr ed-dīn had his reasons not to respond to Ṭalā'iʿ's pleas. Like most Sunnī Muslims, he considered the Fatimid caliphate a dissident state and would do nothing to promote their reputation as devout Muslims. Furthermore, he cherished the old dream of annexing Egypt to the Seljuk kingdom. Had it not been for the arrival of Badr in 1074, Egypt might well have fallen to them. Another Armenian vizier was an obstacle before Seljuk penetration. Indeed, less than two years after Ṭalā'iʿ's death, the Fatimid caliphate was brought to a virtual standstill through Shāwar and Dirghām until its final fall nine years later. In the year 1159 Ṭalā'iʿ had become less idealistic and adopted pragmatic and defensive policies. He kept the Crusaders and the Turks out by huge yearly tributes of money, and worked on a defensive military strategy. Between 1159 and 1160,[49] he built great brick fortifications in Bilbays, which cost him over two hundred thousand dinars.[50] The troops directly related to him were

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[45] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 130–131.
[46] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 270–271.
[47] See Appendix VI, group 8.
[48] See Appendix VI, group 9.
[49] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. I, 282.
[50] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 133–134.

the *Barqiyya* who lived in a special district known as *Ḥārat al-Barqiyya*. His *ghulāms* inhabited a special quarter known as *Ḥārat al-Ṣāliḥiyya*.[51]

Universal *jihād* was impossible in view of Seljuk political objectives in the region; all the same, Ṭalā'i' always saw himself as some sort of a legendary knight in defense of radical Imāmism.[52] In this respect he was clearly distinguishable from Badr and al-Afḍal who were strictly secular and pragmatic figures. War against the Crusaders, for Ṭalā'i', was as an ideal career for a pious Muslim warrior and merely part of the territorial needs of the Fatimid empire in Syria and Palestine. He achieved some victories between 1156 and 1159, but otherwise he was deeply disillusioned. In the summer of 1060, Frankish troops reached al-'Arīsh and were stopped only after negotiations; the outcome was a yearly tribute of one hundred sixty thousand dinars.

After the death of the adolescent caliph al-Fā'iz (July 1160/Rajab 555) in one of his epileptic seizures, Ṭalā'i' raised a nine year old grandson of al-Ḥāfiẓ and a cousin of al-Fā'iz, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf, as caliph al-'Āḍid li-Dīn Allāh to whom he married his daughter.[53] The last caliph, al-'Āḍid, was the fourteenth Fatimid monarch and twenty-fourth imām of the Ḥāfiẓī Ismā'īlīs. Much later, "al-'Āḍid appointed his son Dāwūd as his heir apparent", whom the Ḥāfiẓīs recognized as their imām al-Ḥāmid li'llāh.[54] Ṭalā'i' concluded his political career on his deathbed with three regrets: the first was building the Mosque of al-Ṣāliḥ outside the Zuwayla Gate and the walls of Cairo. The second was appointing the Kurdish Shāwar as governor of Upper Egypt, and in this context he warned Ruzzīk to beware of him. It was indeed at the hands of Shāwar and his allies that not only Ruzzīk but the Fatimid caliphate was going to perish. The last "regret" was the error of concentrating on the defensive fortifications of Bilbays instead of liberating Jerusalem.[55]

In the context of his description of the tragic death of Ṭalā'i' (allegedly by a *bāṭinī*),[56] 'Umāra offered a summary of his character and career. He wrote that Ṭalā'i' was constantly involved in theological and literary studies, and at the same time followed affairs of the state

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[51] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 18.
[52] See Appendix VI, group 10.
[53] al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafayāt*, vol. XVI, 503.
[54] F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 274.
[55] See Ibn Khallikān, *Biographical dictionary*, I, 608; H. Derenbourg, *'Oumara*, 169.
[56] See Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, vol. V, 329; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 81–83.

and met with his officers on military matters. Circumstances were sometimes to his advantage and othertimes against him. The excessive fanaticism to his sect (*madhhab*) led him to indulge in defenses and arguments in its favour. Like most Fatimids in his position, and according to ʿUmāra, Ṭalāʾiʿ in turn loved riches and luxury. He was cruel in his punishments.[57] Rivals and the "restrictions he put on the royal harem . . . earned for him hatred of the caliph's aunt, whose intrigues" accelerated the plot against his life. Fatally wounded and before closing his eyes, Ṭalāʾiʿ ordered the execution of the woman in his presence. Previously, another aunt of al-ʿĀḍid, an elder sister of al-Ẓāfir, had organized an abortive attempt against his life and was similarly punished.[58] Ṭalāʾiʿ died on September 12, 1161/Ramaḍān 20, 556.[59]

In his famous autobiographical work *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār* Usāma b. Munqidh gives valuable information about Ṭalāʾiʿ. He states that their friendship started from the day he arrived in Egypt on November 1144/Jumādā II 539. He was then almost fifty and Ṭalāʾiʿ was in his early forties. Usāma was the guest of honour of the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, who put him up in one of the lavish palaces of al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh.[60] Ten years later, upon the murder of the caliph al-Ẓāfir and the liquidation of other sons of al-Ḥāfiẓ by vizier ʿAbbās and his son Naṣr, the army rose against ʿAbbās. As the latter was preparing to flee to Syria, Ṭalāʾiʿ, who was not yet appointed vizier but was in negotiations with the royal family,[61] contacted Usāma through a messenger. Usāma reports this message as follows (as translated by P. Hitti): "ʿAbbās is incapable of staying in Egypt any longer; he is in fact about to leave for *al-Shām*, and I now rule over the land, you know what exists between me and you, so do not depart with him, for as you are needed there, he will compel you to leave,

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[57] ʿUmāra, *al-Nukat*, 47–48. The passage: "Wa lam takun majālisu insihi tanqaṭiʿu illa bi'l-mudhākarah fī anwāʿ min al-ʿulūm al-sharʿiyya wa'l-adabiyya wafī mudhākarat waqāʾiʿ al-ḥurūb maʿ umarāʾ dawlatihi, wakānat aḥwāluhu ṭawran lahu watāratan ʿalayhi, famimmā huwa ʿalayhi farṭ al-ʿaṣabiyya fī al-madhhab, wa law sharaḥtu hādhihi al-wāhīda, la-kathurat waṭālat wattasaʿat waʿalat, waminhā jamʿu al-māl . . . waminhā al-mayl ʿalā jānib al-jundi waiḍʿāfihim wa'l-qaṣṣ min aṭrāfihim".

[58] A. A. Badawī, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalāʾiʿ*, 7.

[59] The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, 635. Entry by J. Walker.

[60] *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār li-Usāma ibn Munqidh*, (ed.) Philip K. Hitti, (Princeton, 1930), 6; *Memoirs of Usāmah Ibn Munqidh*, (ed., trans.) Philip K. Hitti, (Beirut, Khayats, 1964), 30.

[61] *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār li-Usāma*, 23.

I conjure you by God not to accompany him, because you are my partner in everything good that I may attain". On his part, 'Abbās was aware of the intimate relation between the two and took measures to separate them.[62]

Usāma left Cairo but as the convoy arrived in Bilbays, he found it impossible to proceed with his family; he sent them back to Ṭalā'i' who took care of them and saw to their needs.[63] In Syria, Usāma entered the service of Nūr ed-dīn and during the same year he asked Ṭalā'i' to return his family to Damascus. The latter refused asking Usāma to come to Egypt instead, through Mecca, if necessary. He offered him the governorship of Aswān in Upper Egypt on the frontiers between the Muslim state and the Abyssinians.[64] A second time Usāma was prevented from joining his friend Ṭalā'i', because Nūr ed-dīn wanted to expand to Egypt and did not want to see Ṭalā'i' strengthened. Upon a promise by the Franks to guarantee safe passage for Usāma's family, Ṭalā'i' sent them from Dumyāṭ on one of his private ships laden with gifts that were worth over thirty thousand dinars. The small fortune was confiscated by the Franks and Usāma's library of four thousand rare books was lost.[65]

Literary tastes could and in all probability did bring these two figures together, but there exists the possibility that a previous acquaintance and collaboration in Syria (before 1144) underlay their friendship. Shayzar and the whole valley of Orontes received Armenians from the north; there were large Nuṣayrī communities in the same parts. In his autobiography Usāma referred to Armenians in Shayzar, his native district, three times. The first time, the Armenians were "knights", who were associating with the Franks and fell hostage with them.[66] Usāma's father, who had no political ambitions and spent his time hunting and reading and copying the Qur'ān, had good relations with the Armenian lords of Adana, Antartus, Masisa and Durub, and exchanged goods in return for choice Armenian falcons and falconers.[67] These Armenians seem to be of "orthodox" background; but in another context Usāma spoke of "twenty footmen

[62] Op. cit.
[63] Ibid., 26–27.
[64] Ibid., 34.
[65] Ibid., 35.
[66] Ibid., 103.
[67] Ibid., 202.

of Armenian troops who were good archers".[68] This is clearly another category, distinct from the "knights" who were with the Frankish knights, or simply the "falconers". Archery and militancy in addition to living and hunting among Muslims suggest a background quite distinct from the first two. Although there are remote similarities in the background of Usāma and the Banū Ruzzīk, no clear evidence has been found that they were in Shayzar before going to Egypt.

Abū Shujāʿ Badr ed-dīn, also called al-Nāṣir Muḥyī ed-dīn Majd al-Islām Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ[69]

Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ was brought up as a military man; during his father's term he was commander in chief of the army. Hours before his death, Ṭalāʾiʿ proclaimed his son vizier with the honorary titles of "*al-Malik al-ʿĀdil*" and *al-Nāṣir* (just ruler and conqueror).[70] The seventh (or the eighth, counting Sharaf al-Maʿālī b. al-Afḍal) and last Armenian vizier stayed in office for only fifteen months. At the instigation and with the cooperation of the caliph al-ʿĀḍid and the royal household, Ruzzīk was ousted by Shāwar, the governor of Upper Ṣaʿīd, on December 19, 1162/Muḥarram 18, 558.[71]

According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Ruzzīk followed his father in good management and just rule, and the caliph al-ʿĀḍid, who could not put up with the situation, collaborated with Shāwar Ibn Mujīr.[72] The latter gathered a mob of "rogues" and "negroes" of al-Ṣaʿīd ("*awbāsh al-Ṣaʿīd min al-ʿabīd wa'l-awghād*") and advanced towards Cairo. The rabble destroyed the Ministerial Palaces and the houses of the Banū Ruzzīk.[73] "With the annihilation of the state of Banū Ruzzīk", said ʿUmāra, "the Egyptian state fell".[74] Indeed, the next eight or nine nine years were the slow death of the caliphate at the hands of Shāwar, Dirghām, Shīrkūh and finally Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn.

The poet ʿUmāra, my main source for the short but extremely complicated career of Ruzzīk b. Ṭalāʾiʿ, reveals that Ruzzīk was

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[68] Ibid., 106.
[69] H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumāra*, vol. II, 154, 4 n. and 181.
[70] Ibid., 171; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, vol. II, 528.
[71] The Encyclopaedia of Islam, III, 1190.
[72] H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumāra*, vol. II, 152.
[73] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Kāmil fi'l-Ta'rīkh*, XI, 329.
[74] ʿUmāra al-Yamānī, *al-Nukat*, 68.

"preparing to make a radical return to orthodox Sunnism", as another form of "dissidence" or "*rafḍ*" towards the Fatimid Ismāʿīlī state (similar in political spirit to his father's Imāmism). Under constant and tremendous threats, both internal and external, Ruzzīk may have wanted to pacify Nūr ed-dīn by removing Sunnī objections to Fatimid dissidence towards the ʿAbbasids. ʿUmāra also relates that Ruzzīk invited prominent Sunnī figures and theologians to the palace, one such figure being Shāfiʿī jurist, judge and man of letters *al-qāḍī al-ajall al-fāḍil* Abū ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿAlī b. al-Baysānī.[75] ʿUmāra himself was functioning as *qāḍī* (or Muslim judge) by the end of 1162,[76] and in Ruzzīk's return to orthodoxy, he saw great advantage for the state.[77] In general, ʿUmāra had a very high opinion of Ruzzīk's statesmanship and benevolence towards the common people; he was said to have relieved the latter of heavy taxes and debts.[78] Ruzzīk was not "stingy", though "his father was more generous", he said. Like his father, and incidentally many of the Muslim Armenian viziers, Ruzzīk too "knew poetry well" and made sure that his deeds were recorded in poems.[79] ʿUmāra dedicated to Ruzzīk many verses, some in praise of his character,[80] others to express his gratitude for the gift he received;[81] military victories, one over Bahrām the Ghuzz,[82] another over the Nizārīs were in turn occasions for poems.[83] The Banū Ruzzīk in turn inspired ʿUmāra to write in praise of their solidarity (as "five fingers on a hand"), their generosity, love of sciences and piety, etc.[84] On the occasion of the marriage of Ṭalāʾiʿ's daughter to the caliph al-ʿĀḍid, an event that marked the merge of two families, ʿUmāra was, as always, generously rewarded for the poem he wrote.[85]

Some months after the proclamation of Ruzzīk as vizier, on the 7th of February, the remains of Ṭalāʾiʿ, the "martyr" or the "*shahīd*", were taken to a special mausoleum-*mashhad* in the *Qarāfa* (cemetery)

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75 Ibid., 53–54.
76 H. Derenbourg, *ʿOumāra*, vol. II, 186.
77 Ibid., 59.
78 Ibid., 53.
79 Ibid., 55.
80 Ibid., 55–56.
81 Ibid., 57.
82 Ibid., 58–59.
83 Ibid., 65–66.
84 Ibid., 59–60.
85 Ibid., 61–62.

amidst great mourning in Cairo and Fusṭāṭ. This second burial was a "victory for the Banū Ruzzīk", wrote 'Umāra.[86] In a sense, the rule of Banū Ruzzīk through Ruzzīk was now re-established on a popular level. But the sympathy of the populace for the Ruzzīks was an asset of minor significance. Ruzzīk inherited from his father problems which had at different times caused great upheavals and threatened the state for the past century. He had to encounter the constant threat from a Frankish invasion and Sunnī-Seljuk expansion through the Turkoman (Ghuzz) and Kurdish sympathizers in Egypt. On the homefront, Ruzzīk was left alone with the Banū Ruzzīk to deal with the claims of Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, common rivalry for the vizierate and the intrigues of the adolescent caliph al-'Āḍid and the royal household.

On the anniversary of the death of Ṭalā'i', as robes of honour were being granted to the supporters of the Ruzzīks (like 'Alī b. al-Zubd and the *qāḍī* 'Umāra), Cairo lived under the threat of a Frankish invasion: similar to the invasion of Baldwin I during the spring of 1118, Amaury I mobilized his troops in Ghazza and Ascalon towards al-'Arīsh. An Egyptian force under the command of Dirghām was dispatched to the Bilbays and al-'Urūq. Being inferior in number and preparation, the Fatimid troops withdrew and surprised the enemy from behind. At the same time inundations compelled the Christians to return. The danger was avoided and the Egyptians celebrated victory;[87] 'Umāra wrote a poem in commemoration.[88] Ruzzīk was under a constant pressure to pay the Franks the annual tribute of one hundred sixty thousand dinars.

Ruzzīk inherited a problem from al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, one of his compatriots and predecessors in the vizierate. Prior to Amaury's expedition, Ruzzīk faced a Nizārī Ismā'īlī uprising. On the 13th of August, an "imposing" force landed on the western coasts arriving from the Maghrib; it was led by a man who claimed to be Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir, a "lawful" heir to his grandfather's throne.[89] His father Nizār, al-Mustanṣir's eldest son, died in prison sometime in 1095 and since then Nizārī Ismā'īlīs never had the chance to return. Ruzzīk charged his cousin (the son of Ṭalā'i''s sister) 'Izz ed-dīn Ḥusām with the responsibility of crushing the

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[86] 'Umāra, *al-Nukat*, 53; H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 188.
[87] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 202–204.
[88] 'Umāra, *al-Nukat*, 55–56.
[89] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 198–199.

rebellion. On a previous occasion 'Izz ed-dīn succeeded in dealing with the revolution of Ṭarkhān Salīṭ, a rival for the vizierate. On the 14th of August, 1162 the rebel forces were defeated, the instigators brought to Ruzzīk, and Ibn Nizār was executed by orders from the caliph al-'Āḍid.[90] 'Umāra called this conquest the "victory of victories", probably comparing it with the revolutions of Rukn ed-dīn 'Abbās in 1154, and Yūsuf al-Khārijī and Bahrām al-Ghuzz in 1161.[91]

A few weeks after the Nizārī rebellion, and as the Fatimid armies were involved in confrontations with Amaury's armies in the east before Bilbays, another revolt broke out, centered around al-Maḥalla (in the region of al-Gharbiyya, in Lower Egypt). This time the "agitators were from inside and outside" the country, as Derenbourg puts it.[92] Sayf ed-dīn al-Ḥusayn, Ruzzīk's brother-in-law, and al-Amīr Ṭāhir Murtafi' b. Faḥl—known as al-Hilwās—a Barqiyya officer and close associate of the Ruzzīks since the time of Ṭalā'i', led the expedition against the rebels. By the 12th of September, the Gharbiyya was recovered and Ruzzīk's victorious troops returned to Cairo. The insurrectionists tried to start another movement in the region of Abār and Jazīrat Banī Naṣr; but there too the rebellion was dealt with by an old friend of the family, the governor of the province Tāj al-Khilāfa Ward, a lieutenant of Ṭalā'i'.[93] Another friend of the Banū Ruzzīk, the fanatical Nuṣayrī 'Alī b. al-Zubd was appointed governor of the Maḥalla, at the end of September.[94] To reduce the efficacy of his rivals and aspirers to the vizierate, Ruzzīk started to "promote" strong figures in the administration to clear the capital of their influence. At this time the caliph al-'Āḍid was involved in negotiations to rid himself of the Banū Ruzzīk.

It seems that Ruzzīk gave up under these tremendous pressures and depended on the advice of two relatives, 'Izz ed-dīn Ḥusām and Sayf ed-dīn al-Ḥusayn. The former drove him to entertain exaggerated fears regarding his most dangerous enemy Shāwar and the latter tried to persuade him to follow his father's advice and refrain from direct confrontation. But instead of allowing Shāwar a form of semi-

[90] Ibid., 200; 'Umāra, *al-Nukat*, 65.
[91] H. Derenbourg, *'Oumāra*, vol. II, 200.
[92] Ibid., 208.
[93] Ibid., 209–211.
[94] Ibid., 213.

independence in al-Ṣaʿīd, Ruzzīk is said to have directly challenged him. According to the anonymous author of the continuation of the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, ʿIzz ed-dīn's provocations against Shāwar and his men caused the acceleration of events and the annihilation of the state of Banū Ruzzīk.[95]

A first encounter with Shāwar ended with a victory for Ruzzīk's troops led by ʿIzz ed-dīn Ḥusām. After this battle, known as the Battle of al-Dalja in the province of Ushmunayn in October 1162, the Banū Ruzzīk almost forgot about their most dangerous enemy, who disappeared mysteriously.[96] According to ʿUmāra, Ruzzīk had an ominous dream,[97] and indeed, Shāwar reappeared on the 10th of December. As his forces approached Cairo, Sayf ed-dīn Ḥusayn and then ʿIzz ed-dīn Ḥusām deserted Ruzzīk. The latter is said to have ended up in Ḥama, where he bought villages and vast territories and lived to the end of his life.[98]

Abandoned by his closest relatives and associates, Ruzzīk left Cairo on the 28th of December, 1162. The houses and properties of the family were plundered by the Sudanese. The anonymous author of the continuation of the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* relates that as danger approached, mysterious voices were heard around the palaces of the Banū Ruzzīk, who were leaving through the gates of Cairo separately, urging them to escape and that it was found out that these were angels' voices.[99] The anonymous narrator also tells that Ruzzīk took with him two small sacks of gold and precious stones and left Cairo from the Zuwayla gate, alone and deserted by all. He fell amidst an Arab tribe whose chief was known as Yaʿqūb b. al-Nīs al-Lakhmī. Later on, he was returned to the palace by Shāwar and treated well. But upon rumours that Ruzzīk's brother Jalāl al-Islām was preparing a counter-attack to recover the vizierate, Ṭayy b. Shāwar took the initiative of decapitating Ruzzīk on the 23rd of August of the year 1163.[100] ʿUmāra tells seeing Ruzzīk's head on a platter in the "Hall of Secrets" placed before Ṭayy, Shāwar, Dirghām, Murtafiʿ and other amīrs of the Ministerial Palace. When he wanted

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[95] Ibid., 221. The source: "Le continuateur anonyme de *l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*", ms. 302, II, 244, text copied by M. Noel Giron.
[96] Ibid., 229.
[97] Ibid., 230.
[98] Ibid., 238–239.
[99] Ibid., 245. (Cont. of the *Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*, ms. 302, II, 245.)
[100] Ibid., 247–250.

to leave, shocked at the sight, he was told by Shāwar that if left alive, Ruzzīk would have spared none of them.[101]

Ruzzīk was the victim of the accumulated problems characteristic of a dying kingdom. His very short term of fifteen months in office cast no cultural shadow. Ṭalā'i', however, and perhaps due to his religious zeal and circumstances, left autobiographical poetry and some monuments. He continued the tradition of mausoleum-mosques started by Badr. According to al-Maqrīzī, Ṭalā'i' built the great Mosque of al-Ṣāliḥ (*Jāmi' al-Ṣāliḥ*), just outside the Zuwayla Gate, to bury the head of al-Ḥusayn (brought from Ascalon); the mosque was also meant to contain his tomb as well.[102] This mosque, partly destroyed during the earthquake of the year 1302–3/702, was later reconstructed by the Amīr Sayf ed-dīn Baktimur al-Gukandar.[103] This structure too had a lasting influence on Muslim architecture.[104]

Ṭalā'i' also built a sanctuary or *Mashhad* for the tomb of the assassinated caliph al-Ẓāfir and called it *Mashhad al-Ḥalibiyīn.*[105] A third mosque by him known as *Masjid al-Ṣāliḥ* stood to al-Maqrīzī's day (i.e., after 1398/800). According to the latter, observatories were installed on its roof.[106] Two streets were named after Ṭalā'i', *Khawkhat al-Ṣāliḥiyya* and *Ḥārat al-Ṣāliḥiyya.*[107] The brick fortifications around Bilbays were part of his military architecture.[108]

In the context of architectural constructions by Muslim Armenians in Egypt, al-Maqrīzī gives brief accounts about a mausoleum-mosque by a minor and almost unknown figure, a *ghulām* of Badr's son Muẓaffar, Abū Manṣūr Qusṭā al-Armanī. This figure was appointed governor of Alexandria.[109] The Mosque of Durrī was the work of another *ghulām* of Muẓaffar, Shahāb al-Dawla Durrī, (1138–9/533) who was an extreme Imāmī and had a position in the court of al-Ḥāfiẓ.[110]

During the last years of the Fatimids and the early decades of the Ayyūbīs, we find two more "*rūmī*" mamlūks on the political-military

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[101] 'Umara, *al-Nukat*, 65.
[102] Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 220.
[103] Ibid., vol. IV, 81, vol. II, 293.
[104] K. A. G. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 287.
[105] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 265.
[106] Ibid., vol. IV, 324.
[107] Ibid., vol. III, 73.
[108] Ibid., vol. I, 282.
[109] Ibid., vol. III, 329.
[110] Ibid., 326.

stage of Egypt. They belonged to the same background and arrived in Egypt at the same time. Both were nicknamed Karakūsh (i.e., "black bird" in Turkish, often used to mean owl) and known as such, the first and more important of the two being Bahā' ed-dīn 'Abdallāh (i.e., son of unknown father) al-Asadī al-Rūmī al-Mālikī al-Nāṣirī (d. 1201), officer of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn. The second was Sharaf ed-dīn al-Armanī al-Muẓaffarī al-Nāṣirī al-Ghuzzī al-Taqawī (d. 1212). The Armenian identity of the first is assumed by some but not established.[111]

Bahā' ed-dīn Karakūsh was a eunuch and *mamlūk* of Kurdish Zangī Asad ed-dīn Shīrkūh, who became vizier after Shāwar and was assassinated by Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn in 1169. (His second term in the vizierate lasted five years, 1164–1169.)[112] Karakūsh, who had become an amīr, is said to have played an important role in the appointment of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn as vizier to succeed his uncle Shīrkūh, who died after two months in office in March 1169. He occupied many positions, like chamberlain for the royal family after al-'Āḍid's death, and regent for the heir of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn in 1199. He was Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's most important advisor. When he fell slave to the Franks in 'Akkā in 1191, where he was sent to fortify the city, his master paid a ransom of twenty thousand dinars and rescued him about two years later. Karakūsh is famous as a builder; the citadel of Cairo, the extended walls that included Cairo and Fusṭāṭ, the bridge of Gīzeh, and his houses are some of his best known works. The severity of Karakūsh must have gained him some enemies, one of whom was a certain Ibn Mammātī who wrote a pamphlet called *Kitāb al-fashūsh fī aḥkām karakūsh* (i.e., Book on the stupidity of the judgments of Karakūsh).[113]

Sharaf ed-dīn al-Armanī al-Muẓaffarī al-Nāṣirī al-Ghuzzī al-Taqawī was one of the most violent figures of the 1170's. A *mamlūk* of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's nephew al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Taqiyy ed-dīn, he was involved in wide-scale military operations in Tunisia and Libya. Plans that ran counter to those of Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn caused his imprisonment. After his release, Karakūsh went back to Tripolitana in 1176–1177; following turbulent years in north Africa, he was executed in 1212. "Thus there came to an end the life of an adventurer who had carried on warfare for forty years as much for Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's benefit as for

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[111] For both, see The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1978), 613–614.

[112] Op. cit.; F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 272.

[113] The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, 613.

his own". It is said that some of the sons resumed the career of this Armenian in the same region and perished there.[114]

In the context of this study, Sharaf ed-dīn Karakūsh is of special interest not only as a Muslim Armenian military figure, but for the fact that there were Armenians in the service of the Seljuks and the Ghuzz, named for their patrons as *turkī* or *ghuzzī*. On these relatively inferior positions the Armenians could not be distinguished from their patrons; naturally, some figures like Sharaf ed-dīn Karakūsh used the opportunity to promote their private military power, but these attempts bear no political importance. However, once in a position of power the political objectives of the Muslim Armenian figures in al-Shām and Egypt were radically different vis-à-vis the Arab-Muslim side. Cooperation between the sectarians and the Muslims started from the seventh century, mutual interests and some common religious attitudes—due to the syncretistic nature of sectarian thought—created a proximity at the roots.

While the Muslim Armenians in Syria and later on in Egypt saw themselves as natives, the Seljuks moved in as invaders. Self-interest motivated the improvement in conditions by most Armenian figures wherever they were found, but the phenomenon also reflected their positive attitudes towards these locations and the Muslims in general. The contrast is explicit in the case of Bahrām and his men. No complaint of any sort was recorded against the Armenians of the powerful Jamālīs or the Banū Ruzzīk and the viziers themselves. On the contrary, they were lavishly praised by most medieval Muslim sources. But as Bahrām was sent with the clear intention of conquering and subjugating, as his nephew Catholicos Nersēs Shnorḥali explains, the reaction was as expected and no mention is made of his contribution to the Fatimid state. While even Yānis al-Armanī, the most modest figure among these viziers, managed to start two mosques and in general was praised as a disciplinarian and a man of *hayba*.

The Muslim Armenian viziers were competent administrators and worked for the restoration of the Fatimid state, because in the latter's strength lay their own future. The maintenance of tight discipline and broad social justice, for which all without exception are particularly known, was necessary to insure a legitimate place in a relatively strange society. Religious tolerance and consideration of all Islamic as well as Christian elements was essentially another means to gain

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[114] Ibid., 614.

for themselves, as peculiar factions, a place in a more liberal social-political-cultural structure. The sectarian ideal and culture was and would naturally be excluded in strictly "orthodox" establishments, from Byzantine to Armenian and Muslim. Preceding the Fatimid period, we find the sectarian centers of power only on border regions between the two powers. The reduction of Fatimid rituals was a reflection of the diminished position of the caliph, who was essentially central, but on the other hand it was an aspect of the secularization of the state for greater balance among the various factions, including the newly added Armenian element. The often mentioned fairness of the Armenian viziers towards all denominations is to be understood in this context. And, irrespective of their motives, the internal policies of these figures proved to be more beneficial for the caliphate itself and more altruistic in its consequences than any other socio-military faction hitherto realized. The involvement of Badr and the sectarian Armenian element in Fatimid politics at the end of 1073 provided Egypt with a form of immunity against Seljuk ambitions and granted the caliphate almost one more century; the death of the last figure, Ruzzīk b. Ṭalā'i', in 1163 marked the start of events that led to the downfall of the Fatimid state at the hands of the Turks and their Kurdish allies. There is a very basic difference in the way the latter and the Armenian viziers viewed the matter of a strong and stable Fatimid state in Egypt. While the Seljuks regarded these countries as vast territories to be invaded and its people subjected, the Armenians worked for the reinforcement of the existing structures not as invaders but as settlers in a new land with a natural interest in its improvement.

The first non-Shī'ī, Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn, was proclaimed vizier to al-'Āḍid,[115] and from 1169 to 1171 he achieved the first phase of this plan to eradicate the dynasty and destroy the Fatimid Caliphate which he and the Seljuk Nūr ed-dīn considered dissident or *rāfiḍ*. They regarded the Fatimids as the descendents of the *Majūsī*, i.e., the Zoroastrians and Jews, incidentally, classic accusations directed to all Armenian sects from the beginning (the second accusation referred to their strict monotheism and adoptionistic christology). Consequently, according to them, the Fatimids were in no position to claim to have any relation to the Prophet and any leading position in the Islamic

[115] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 476.

nation.[116] Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn closed the Mosque of al-Ḥākim and al-Azhar and it was only a century later, at the time of the Mamlūks, that both were re-opened.[117] As the Chief Judge and Missionary (parts of his position as vizier), Ṣalāḥ ed-din expelled the Shīʿī jurists and cancelled the Shīʿī peculiarities from the prayers.[118] The name of Nūr ed-dīn was mentioned in the *khuṭba* after that of the caliph al-ʿĀḍid.[119] Only Shāfiʿī and Mālikī schools were allowed to function. Badr, al-Afḍal and even Imāmī Kutayfāt allowed all the Islamic schools to function; the latter appointed four judges, two Sunnīs and two Shīʿīs. Badr allowed the Sunnīs to apply their own laws of inheritance, and in general the Fatimids were more liberal towards the others, as al-Qalqashandī points out.[120] During Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's term, theological schools were opened for the teaching of Sunnī Islam;[121] al-Maqrīzī speaks of popular revolts against these measures.[122] Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn reduced the staff of the palace, put restrictions on the royal family, and deprived the caliph of all possessions. He was said to have brought more evils upon the Fatimids than the Franks ever did.[123] The minorities, and in particular the Sudanese and the Armenians, were persecuted.[124] The Fatimids proper fared no better. On September 1171/567, the name of the ʿAbbasid caliph replaced that of al-ʿĀḍid in the *khuṭba* as a grave sign of the end of the dynasty.[125] Very much in the style of Badr's liquidation of the Turkish amirs, Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's compatriots and the Ghuzz murdered the Egyptian amīrs in a single day and divided their possessions as their *iqṭaʿ*. But according to al-Maqrīzī, Ṣalāḥ ed-dīn's men had the habit of also confiscating private homes and property at will, and the people of Cairo suffered under their atrocities.[126]

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[116] Abū Shāmah, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*, ed. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Suʿūd, (Cairo), vol. I, 201.

[117] Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. II, 67.

[118] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 477.

[119] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 175.

[120] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, vol. III, 520.

[121] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 192–193.

[122] Ibid., vol. I, 16–17.

[123] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 481. The source: Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufrij al-Kurūb fī akhbār banī ayyūb*, (ed.) al-Shayyāl, (Cairo, 1953–1958), vol. I, 213.

[124] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 3 and Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, vol. I, 175–177.

[125] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 483.

[126] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 175; vol. III, 379; vol. I, 156.

There are several different accounts of the real causes of al-ʿĀḍid's death, in most of which Ṣalaḥ ed-dīn has a part.[127] Al-ʿĀḍid was hardly twenty one years old when he died. He was the fourteenth and the last of the Fatimid caliphs, the twenty-fourth imām of the Ḥāfiẓī Ismāʿīlīs. By his death, "the greatest religio-political and cultural success of Shīʿī Islam" through the Fatimid caliphate came to a close after 262 years (909–1171).[128] It was a strange coincidence that the last caliph should have been called al-ʿĀḍid, meaning "breaker" and that the date of his death should have coincided with that of al-Ḥusayn, that is *ʿĀshūrāʾ*.[129] Three years later, in 1174 after Nūr ed-dīn's death, Ṣalāh ed-dīn was independent and founded the Ayyūbid dynasty that spread over Egypt, Syria, the Yaman, etc.

The last reports concerning Armenians are about the Armenian guards (called *ḳetrịs*) of the royal palace who perished in the fire that destroyed the buildings, and the departure of the Anonymous Patriarch of Itfih to Jerusalem in 1173. But from the arrival of Badr to this last event, a century of Armenian history in Egypt was left in total obscurity. Criteria of orthodoxy and heresy fragmented the field of medieval Armenian cultural and political history. Although the history of the sects covered some marginal facts, the broad historical issues related to them fell out of classification and context altogether, and the episode of the Fatimid Armenians was the most prominent example in this respect. While medieval Armenian historians were silent about these unorthodox Armenians, their contemporary colleagues treated the phenomenon as a collection of chronicles. Either way, the episode awaited investigation, along with many others, as one moment in Middle Eastern history in which a long chain of interactive forces culminated.

In addition to its strictly political significance, what seems to have remained undetected by most students of medieval history is the value of the unique cultural-political experience of the Armenian sectarian factions. Their history reflected a radically different manner of interacting with the environment. Their initial doctrinal concerns developed into a spirituality, beyond doctrinal purity, and a zeal that often found its expression in a violent yet fair sense of justice. Their national identity in turn was a loyalty beyond the boundaries of native language

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[127] See A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 483–484.
[128] F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 273.
[129] A. Mājid, *The Rise and the Fall*, 484.

and culture. The inclusion and the study of the experience and long history of the Armenian unorthodox factions will mean the completion of a panorama of mutually explanatory elements of the same broad historical expanse; it will also contribute to the study of medieval Armenian history in its Middle Eastern context.

APPENDICES

Appendix I. Three canons of the Council of Shahapivan concerning the Mẹẓghnēans. The English translation of the canons is from N. Garsoyan, *The Paulicians*, 82–83, with minor changes of some terms.

Canon VIX. "Let no bishop or priest or deacon or any member of the clergy or of a congregation keep any kind of housekeeper as is the custom of the Mẹẓghnē. If anyone should have one, and this be confirmed by the testimony of witnesses, let him be deposed from his order, whatever it be, and let him be considered impious and a publican".

Canon XIX. "If anyone found in Mẹẓghnēuṭyun, whether he be a priest or a deacon or a monk, let him be branded on the forehead with the sign of fox, and let him be confined for penance to a place for hermitage. Then if he be found again, let him be hamstrung on both legs and be sent to a leprosarium, for the man was in the right and did not understand. Let the same punishment be visited on a monk. Further, if men be found in the sect with their wives and children, let the men, women and children who have reached the age of reason and do not know the pollution, let them be taken away and given into the hands of the holy servants of the Church to be brought up and educated in the true faith and the fear of God".

"If there be found any evil doer among the people and the priests have learned of this and nor reported it to the bishop; if this be found true upon investigation and the priests have known the matter for any days and months before and not addressed a complaint to the bishop, let the canonical punishment for Mẹẓghnē be borne also by the priests and let them not perform their priestly office for the rest of their lives . . . Then if the priests have reported to the bishop, and this be supported by the testimony of witnesses, and the bishop either accept a bribe and cover it up or show partiality, and if this be shown by the testimony of witnesses, namely that the complaint of the priests really reached his ear and he disdained God's command and did not go out to seek him who was lost, and was not jealous and an avenger of God's law, let him be deposed from his see who did the adulterer, and let the priest be acknowledged innocent. But if the bishop was diligent and an avenger, and the priests and other men bear witness to the bishop's labors, and he report about the evil doer to the authorities, but the prince [*ishkhan*] of the country, or the chief *nakharar* of any village, or the lord [*tēr*] of a province [*gavar*] wishes to be the protector of uncleanliness [*pẹghẓuṭyun*] and to hide the adulterer, either for the silver of perdition or from partiality or service, and does not prefer to love Christ and his commands and to be an avenger of the laws of the lord and of the spirit and the flesh—let such a one be accursed and let him be cut off from the holy Church until he shall deliver the polluted one into the hands of the bishop. And if the pollution be found in the house of the nakharar, either in his wife, or his daughter, or his son, or in himself, and he should not hand his family over to the bishop and himself return to holiness, but should wish to be their tyrannical refuge, let him be accursed with all his house, his kin and his wife. Let him not dare come out into a public place, let not his friends and all the world consort with him until he shall have gone from his uncleanliness and come to the holy Church. And if he be not in the uncleanliness [himself] let him hand over his household and his servants into the hands of the chief bishop for rebuke . . . And if he himself, with his household, be found in Mẹẓghnēuṭyun let him be seized together with his polluted

household and let him be brought for judgment before the chief bishop and before the greatest princes and the leading judges, and let them jointly avenge the laws of God so that others, beholding this, in holiness and fear, should revere the Creator of all".

The Armenian text from A. Ghẹldẹjian, *Book of Armenian Canons*, 73, 80–82.

Ժ՛Ը. Եպիսկոպոս որ կամ երէց կամ սարկաւագ կամ ով իցէ որ ի պաշտօնէից կամ յուխտէ, տանտի կին կոք մի իշխեսցէ ունել որպէս սովորութիւն է մծղնէից, ապա թէ ոք ունիցի և վկայութեամբ յայտնեսցին, ի կարգէն յորում և իցէ, մերժեսցի ի բաց և համարեալ եղիցի որպէս մաքսաւոր, զի սուրբ խորհուրդն տէրունական կանարաւս ընդունի, զի արատաւորք ի ձեռս անարատիս փրկեսցին.
ԺԹ. Եթէ ոք ի մծղնէութեան գտցի կամ երէց կամ սարկաւագ կամ աբեղայ, քահանայութիւնն լուծի, աղուէսադրոշմ ի ճակատն դիցի և ի տեղիս ճգնաւորաց յապաշխարութիւն տացեն: Ապա եթէ դարձեալ ի նմին գտցի, զջիղսն երկոսին կտրեսցեն և ի գողենոց տացեն, զի մարդ ի պատուի էր և ոչ իմացաւ դոյն պատուհաս և աբեղային: Այլա եթէ արք կանամբք և որդւովք գտցին յաղանդին,կարանց և զկանանց և զիրագէտ մանկանց զջիղսն կտրեսցեն, աղուէսադրոշմ ի ճակատն դիցեն և ի գողենոց տարցին յապաշխարութիւն. և մանկունք, որ չիցեն գիտացեալ զպղծութիւնն կալցին և տացին ի ձեռս ս. պաշտօնէից Աստուծոյ, որ սնուցեն և ուսուցեն ի հաւատս ճշմարիտս և զերկիւղ :տեառն":
Ի. Եթէ ուրուք չարագործ գտցի ի ժողովրդեան և երիցունք գիտիցեն և ոչ յայտնեսցեն եպիսկոպոսին, և յորժամ քնին լինին, և վերայ հասանիցեն և ճշմարիտ իցէ, և գիտէր երէցն աւուրբք և ամսովք ժամանակօք զգործն նոցա և ոչ բողոքեաց եպիսկոպոսին, զմծղնէիցն զպատուհաս զոր եդին կանոնք, կրեսցեն և երիցունք զերիցութիւն մի իշխեսցեն պաշտել ի կեանս իւրեանց, զի միւս երէցն , որ կայ ի տեղիս նոցա, ընդ նոսա հայեցեալ՝ ճշմարիտ հովուեսցէ զժողովուրդն: Ապա եթէ երէցն ասիցէ ցեպիսկոպոսն, և վկայութեամբ ի յայտ առնիցի, և եպիսկոպոսն կամ կարասի առնուցու և ծածկիցէ կամ աչառիցէ և վկայութեամբ ի յայս եկեսցէ, թէ արդարեւ եհաս յականջս նորա բողոք յերիցանց և նա արհամարեաց զպատուիրանս Աստուծոյ և կորուսելոյն խնդիր չարար և չեղեւ նախանձախնդիր և վրէժխնդիր օրինացն Աստուծոյ, անկեալ յաթոռոյն կործանեսցի, որ ծած շնացողս և երէցն անպարտ եղիցի: Ապա եթէ եպիսկոպոսն ջանացաւ և վրէժխնդիր եղեւ և երիցունք և այլ մարդիկ վկայեսցեն զաշխատութենէ եպիսկոպոսին և նա զչարագործն յայտ արար իշխանութեան ուրուք, և իշխան որ էր աշխարհին, և գեղջ ուրուք աւագ նախարար՝ տէր գաւառին կամի պղծութեանն թիկունք լինել և զշնացողն ղօղել և թագուցա-նել, կամ վասն ակնառութեան և ծառայութեան, և ոչ ընտրեսցէ զՔրիստոս սիրել և զպատուիրանս նորա, և վրէժխնդիր օրինացն

տեառն և հօգւոյ և մարմնոյ լինել, եղիցի նզովեալ այնպիսին և յեկեղեցւոյ սրբոյ ի բաց կացցէ, մինչեւ տացէ պղծագործն ի ձեռս եպիսկոպոսին: Եթէ ի նախարարի տան գտցին պղծութիւնքն, կամ կին նորա, կամ դուստր, կամ որդի, կամ ինքն ի սրբութիւն դարձցի, բռնապաստան կամիցի լինել, ամենայն տամբ իւրով և ծննդովք և կենօք նզովեալ լիցի, ի հրապարակ մի իշխեսցէ գալ, ընկերք և աշխարհ ամենայն մի հաղորդեսցին ընդ նմա մինչեւ՝ ինքն իցէ ի պղծութեան ի սրբութիւն եկեսցէ: Ապա թէ ինքն ոչ իցէ ի պղծութեան, զընտանիս և զծառայս տացէ ի ձեռս եպիսկոպոսին գլխաւորի ի կշտամբութիւն: Ապա եթէ ոստիկանի [*ոստանիկի*] տան գտցի պղծութիւն կամ ինքն և ընտանիքն, որպէս ասացաք, զընտանիս կշտամբեսցեն ըստ օրինի պատուհասի՝ զոր եդաք: Ապա եթէ ինքն եւս ընդ ընտանիսն ի մծղնէութեան գտցի, կալցեն միաբան պղծագործ ընտանիօքն հանդերձ և ի հրապարակ ածցեն առաջի գլխաւոր եպիսկոպոսին, և առաջի մեծամեծաց իշխանաց և աւագ դատաւորաց և միաբան վրէժխնդիր լինիցեն օրինացն Աստուծոյ, զի տեսեալ այլոց սրբութեամբ և երկիւղիւ պաշտեսցեն զարարիչն ամենեցուն: Զի ողջ և կատարեալ լիցին կարգ աստուածապաշտութեան, վրէժխնդրութեամբ օրինաց և յարգանօք սրբոց. զի գտցուք ճշմարիտ ծառայք Աստուծոյ բանիւք եւ արդեամբք, զի նոյնպէս հատուցմանց բարեաց ի բարերարէն Աստուծոյ ակնկալցուք և ժառանգեսցուք զպարգեւս նորա զվախճան յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից ամէն":

Appendix II. The Paulician heresy—*Book of Heresies*, #153, #154.

ճԾԳ. "Քաղերթական, որ է արիւնարբուաց: Թագաւոր ոմն Յունաց աշխարհէն պատահեաց պիղծ աղանդին պօլիկեանց և ոչ կարաց դարձուցանել զնոսա յաղանդէն իւրեանց, հալածեաց զնոսա անդր քան զլեառն Կովկաս: Եւ կին մի առաջնորդ նոցա Մարէ անուն, կախարդ և զունդ: Զարագործացն բարի առնէր և բարեգործացն պատուհաս, և զկանայսն հասարակաց ուսուցանէր, և աւուրս ե որոշեալ –զոր մենք հասարակաց կոչեմք– զայն սատանայական անուանէր, և ի նոսա հեղուլ արիւն մարդոյ բարի ասէր, և որ ուտէ և ըմպէ զարիւն մարդոյ այն արդարութիւն: Եւ յազդմանէ սատանայէ տեսիլ տեսանէր և մանկունս փողոտէր և ասէր, թէ նոցա հոգիքն գան ի տեսիլ կախարդաց":

ճԾԴ. "Ապա կին մի Շէթի անուն, այնր աղանդոյն, ելեալ զկնի թուրքացն եկն ի Հայս, և ոմն Պօղ յԱյրարատեայ գաւառէն, որ աշակերտեալ էր սրբոյն Եփրեմի, առեւանգեաց զկինն և խառ– նակեցաւ աղանդն ընդ քրիստոնէութեան: Զարեգակն Քրիստոս ասէին, ոչ մեռեալ և ոչ յարուցեալ. և վասն այնորիկ ծոմանան ի կիրակէի: Եւ եկեալ սուրբն Եփրեմ ոչ կարաց քակել զնա յաղանդոյն և անէծ զնա և գնաց":

Appendix III. The passage from Grigor of Narek's "Letter to the Abbot of the Monastery of Kjav, *Book of Letters*, also in A. Gueorguizian", *The Movement of Paulician-Ṭonrakians in the Armenian Apostolic Church*, 95–98.

"Բազում ինչ աստուածային և առաքելական, ամենայն ինչ
ուրացեալ է ի նոցանէ և խափանեալ յաստուածային կարգաց:
Ձեռնադրութիւնն, կոր առաքեալքն ի Քրիստոսէ ընկալան. և
հաղորդութիւնն մարմնոյ նորա, կոր ասաց առաքեալ, եթէ կհացն
Հաղորդութեան ճաշակելով, նոյն ինքն կԱստուած միացեալ ի
մարմնի ընդունիմք և ճաշակեմք, կոր Սմբատ՝ հաասարակաց
կերակուր՝ կսարսափելին վարդապետաց. և կծնունդն հոգեւոր
երկանցն՝ որ ի ջրոյ և հոգւոյ, ծանուցեալ թէ որդիս Աստուծոյ գործէ,
ջուր ինչ լուալեաց կնոյն նոցին ուսոյց. և կարհնաբանեալ կաւր
կիւրակէին յորում արար կլոյսն առաջին, և կատարեաց կլոյսն
Յարութեան իւրոյ ի նմին. և կլոյսն կննարար գալստեանն նովաւ
տնօրինեաց, կայն պատկեր պաշտելի աւուր՝ ընդ այլոցն
կուգաթուեալ նոցին թարգմանեաց: Արդ կո՞րս յասցանէ կնոցա
գիտեմք խափանեալս ոչ առաքելական կամ աստուածականս. կծըն֊
րադրութեա՞ն խորհրդական պաղատանս, կոր ինքն արարիչ
ամենայնի խոնարհեալ կրկնեաց. թէ կաւազանն ուրացեալ ի
նոցանէ, յորում ինքն Քրիստոս մկրտեցաւ. թէ կհաղորդութիւն
անմահութեան, կոր ինքն Տէրն բոլորից ճաշակեաց. թէ մծղնէական
անխտիր պղծութիւնն, կոր Տէրն կհայեցուածն արգիլեալ խստեաց.
թէ կնշանն երկրպագեալ, և կիշխանութիւն. թէ կմարդապաշտ
ուրացութիւնն, որ գարշելի և անիծեալ քան կկռապաշտութիւն. թէ
կինքաձեռն քամահանաց քահանայութիւնն, սատանայի է նմանու֊
թիւն. թէ կպսակին ամուսնութեան անգոսնութիւն, կոր ինքեան
սքանչելաւք, և մարդն իւրով մերձենան առ յիրարս, կատարեալ սէր
համարին և յԱստուծոյ, և հաճոյ Քրիստոսի, թէ Աստուած սէր է, և
կսիրով միաւորիլն կամի ոչ կպսակ. թէ կերեխայրեացն կատակեր֊
գական երգիծաբանութիւնն, կորս Աբէլ և Նոյ, և Աբրահամ և Դա֊
ւիթ, և Սողոմոն և Եղիայ աստուածային բարկութեան ցուցին հաշ֊
տարարութիւն. թէ որ կգլխաւոր աղանդին իւրեանց գարշութեանց
յանդգնեալ Քրիստոս անուանեն, կոր Քրիստոս կանխավկայեաց, թէ
յարիցեն սուտ մարգարէք. և այս է ասելն մարգարէին, թէ խորհեցաւ
անկգամն ի սրտի իւրում, թէ ոչ իցէ Աստուած":

Appendix IV. The letters of the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ: the first is addressed to Bahrām, the next two are letters of assurance for him and his relatives (Basil, Zarqa and Bahrām). I have also quoted the section related to Bahrām in al-Ḥāfiẓ's reply to King Roger II of Sicily. The source is al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, the volumes and pages are mentioned in each case.

Document 1. First letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Bahrām, vol. VIII, 260–262.

وهذه نسخة كتاب كتب به عن الحافظ لدين الله الخليفة الفاطمى بالديار المصرية، الى بهرام النصرانى الأرمنى الذى كان إستوزره، ثم خرج عليه رضوان ولخشى، ارتغاماً للدين، لتحكم نصرانى فى أهل الملة ، وولى الوزارة مكانه، ففر هارباً إلى الشام ناقضاً للعهد، وكتب الى الحافظ يطلب أهله وجماعته من الأرمن الذين كانوا معه فى جملة جند الديار المصرية، مظهراً للطاعة والرغبة الى التخلى عن الدنيا، والإنقطاع فى بعض الديرة للتعبد مكراً وخديعة، فكتب له بذلك جواباً عن كتابه الوارد منه. ونص ما كتب إليه:

عُرض بحضرة أمير المؤمنين الكتاب الوارد منك ايها الأمير المقدم، المؤيد، المنصور، عز الخلافة وشمسها تاج المملكة ونظامها، شيخ الدولة وعمادها، ذو المجدين، مصطفى امير المؤمنين. ووقف على جميعه، واستولى بحكمه على مضمونه.

فأما ما وسعتَ القول فيه وبسطته، وتفسحتَ فيما أوردته منه، وذكرته مما فحواه ومحصوله ما أنت عليه من الطاعة، والولاء والمشايعة، والإعتراف بنعم الدولة عليك، ولإقرار بإحسانها إليك، فلعمرُ أميرِ المؤمنين إن هذا الذى يليق بك ويحسن منك، ويحسن أن يرد عنك. ويجب أن يعرف لك، وقد كانت الدولة أسلفتك من حسن الظن قديماً ونقلتك فى درجة التنويه حديثاً، حتى رفعتك الى أعلى المراتب، وبلغتك ما لم تسم إليه همة طالب، وأوطأت الرجال عقبك وجعلت جميع أهل الدولة تبعك، مما أغنى إعترافك به عن الإطالة بشرحه، والإطناب فى ذكره.

وأما ما ذكرته مما كان أمير المؤمنين أعطاك التوثقة عليه، فأجابك منه إلى ما رغبت فيه، فأستقر بينه وبينك فى معناه ما اطمأننت إليه، فلم يزل أمير المؤمنين على الوفاء باطنا وظاهراً، ونية وعلانية، واعتقاده أن لا يرجع عنه، ولا يغير ما أحكمه منه، وإنما حال بينه وبين هذا المراد أن كافة المسلمين فى البعد والقرب غضبوا لملتهم وامتعضوا مما لم تجربه عادة فى شريعتهم، ونفرت نفوسهم مما يعتقدون أن الصبر عليه قادح فى دينهم، ومضاعف لآلامهم، وأنه ذنب لا يغفر، ووزر لا يتجاوز ولا يصفح <عنه> حتى إن أهل المشرق أخذوا فى لك وأعطوا، وعزموا على ما اتفقوا عليه مما صرفه الل اللّه وكفى مئونته والاشتغال به.

وأما ما التمسته من تسيير من بالباب من طائفتك إليك، فهذا أمرٌ لا يسوغ ولا يمكن فعله، ولو جاز أن يؤمر به لمنع المسلمون منه فلم يفسحوا فيه. والآن فلن يخلو حالك من أحد قسمين: إما أن تكون متعلقاً بأمور الدنيا وغيرمنفصل عنها، فأمير المؤنين يخيّرك فى ولاية أحد ثلاثة مواضيع:

إما قوص، أو إخميم، أو أسيوط، فأيها اخترت ولاك إياه، ورد أمره والنظر فيه إليك، على أن تقتصر من الذين معك على خمسين او ستين فارساً، وتسيّر الباقين الى الباب ليجروا على عاداتهم، ورسومهم فى واجباتهم وإقطاعتهم، إذ كانوا عبيد الدولة ومتقلبين فى فضلها، وأكثرهم متولدون فى ظلها. وإما أن تكون على القضية التى ما زلت تذكر رغبتك فيها وإيثارك لها: من التخلى عن الدنيا ولزوم أحد الديرة، والانقطاع الى العبادة، فإن كنت مقيماً على ذلك فتخيّر ضيعةً من أى الضياع شئت يكون فيها دير تقيم فيه وتنقطع إليه، فتعيّن الضيعة ليجعلها أمير المؤمنين تسويغاً لك مؤبداً، وإقطاعاً دائماً مخلداً، وتجرى مجرى الملك، ويكتب لك بذلك ما جرت العادة بمثله، مما تطمئن تغليه وتستحكم ثقتك به. وإن أبيت القسمين المذكورين و لم يرضك الأول منهما، ولا رغبت فى الثانى، فتحقق أن المسلمين بأجمعهم، وكافتهم وأسرهم، وكلّ من يقول بالشهادتين: من قاصٍ ودانٍ، وقريب وبعيد، وكبير وصغير، ينفرون إليك، ويتفقون على القصد لك، ولا يختلفون فى التوجه نحوك، وهو عمل دينى، لا يريثه أمر دنيوى، فتأمل ما تضمنته هذه الإجابة من الأقسم، وطالع بما عندك فى ذلك.

Document 2/a. Letter of assurance for Bahrām, vol. XIII, 325.

وعلى ذلك كتب الحافظ لدين الله أحد خلفاء الفاطميين الأمان لبهرام الأرمنى، حين صرف من وزارته وهرب عنه الى بلاد الأرمن، وكتب الى الحافظ يظهر الطاعة ويسأل تسيير أقاربه فكتب له بالأمان له ولأقاربه. فأما ما كُتب له هو فنصه بعد البسملة:

هذا أمان أمر بكتبه عبد الله ووليه عبد المجيد أبو الميمون الحافظ لدين الله أمير المؤمنين، للأمير المقدم، المؤيد، المنصور، عز الخلافة وشمسها، وتاج المملكة ونظامها، فخر الأمراء شيخ الدولة وعمادها، ذى المجدين، مصفى أمير المؤمنين بهرام الحافظى: فإنك آمن بأمان الله تعالى وأمان جدنا محمد رسوله، وأبينا أمير المؤمنين علىّ بن أبى طالب صلى ال له عليهما، وأمان أمير المؤمنين، على نفسك ومالك، وأهلك وجميع حالك، لا ينالك سوء، ولا يصل إليك مكروه، ولا تقصد باغتيال، ولا يُخرج بك عن عادة الإحسان والإنعام، والتميز والإكرام، وحراسة والإكرام، وحراسة النفس، والصون للحريم والأهل، والرعاية فى القُرب والبُعد، ما دمت متحيزاً إلى طاعة الدولة العلوية، ومتصرفاً على أحكام مشايعتِها، موالياً لمواليها، ومعادياً لمعاديها، ومستمراً على مرضاة إخلاصك. فثق بهذا الأمان واسكن إليه، واطمئن إلى مضمونه، والله بما أودعه كفيلٌ وعليه شهيد

وما توفيق أمير المؤمنين إلا بالله، عليه يتوكّلُ وإليه ينيب

Document 2/b. Letter of assurance for the relatives of Bahrām: Basil, Zarqa, Bahrām, vol. XIII, 325–326.

وأما الأمانُ الذى كُتبَ لأقاربه فنصُّه:

هذا أمانٌ تقدم بكتبِه عبد الله ووليه، لبسيل وزرقا، وبهرام ابن أختهما، ومن ينتمى إليه ويتعلّق بهم، ويلتزمون أمرَه ممن دونهم، ومن يتمسّك بسببهم. مضمونه: إنكم معشَرَ الجماعة بأسرِكم لما قصدتم الدولة ووفدتم عليها، وتَفيأتم ظلّها وهاجرتم إليها، شملكم الصنع الجميل، وغَمَركم الإنعام السابغُ والإحسان الجزيل، وكنفتم بالرعاية التامة، والعناية الخاصة لا العناية العامة، ووفر حظكم من الواجبات المقررة لكم، والإقطاعات الموسومة بكم، وكنتم مع ذلك تذكرون رغبتكم فى العود إلى دياركم، والرجوع إلى أوطانكم، والتفاتاً إلى من تركتموه من ورائكم. وقد سرتم من الباب على قضية المخافة، وقد أمنكم أمير المؤمنين، فأنتم آمنون بأمان الله تعالى وأمان جَدِّنا محمدٍ رسولِه وأبينا أمير المؤمنين: عليٍّ بن أبى طالبٍ، صلى الله عليهما، وأمان أمير المؤمنين، على نفوسكم وأهليكم وأموالكم وما تحويه أيديكم ويحوزه ملككم، ويشتمل عليه احتياطكم، لا ينالكم فى شيءٍ من ذلك مكروه، ولا سبب مَخُوف، ولا يمسكم سوءٌ، ولا تخشون من ضيم، ولا تُقصدون بأذية، ولا يغير لكم رسم، ولا تنقض بكم عادة، وأنتم مستمرون فى واجباتكم وإقطاعاتكم على ما عهدتموه، ولا تنقصون منها، ولا تُنجسون فيها. هذا إذا رغِبتم فى الأقامة فى ظلالِ الدولة، فإن آثرتم ما كنتم تذكرون الرغبة فيه من العودة إلى دياركم عند انفتاح البحر، فهذا الأمانُ لكم إلى أن تتوجهوا مشمولين بالرعاية، ملحوظين بالعناية، ولكم الوفاء بجميع ذلك، والله لكم به وكيلٌ وكفيلٌ، وكفى به شهيدا.

Document 3. Letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to King Roger II of Sicily, Ibid., vol. VI, 458–462. The following is the latter part of the document where the issue of Bahrām is dealt with, 460–463.

وأما سؤالك الآن فى إطلاق من تجدد أسْره، وإنهاؤك أن ذلك مما يهُمُّك أمره، فقد شفّعك أميرالمؤمنين بالإجابة إليه على ما أُلِف من كريم شيمته، وسيّرَ إليك مع رسولك من تُضمن الثبتُ ذكر عدّته، وقد علمت ما كان من أمر بهرام ووصوله إلى الدولة الفاطمية خلّد الله ملكها شريداً طريداً، قد نبت به اوطانه، وقذفته دياره، لا مال ولا حال، لا عشيرة ولا رجال، فقبلته أحسن قبول، وبلغت به فى الإحسان ما يزيد على السُّول، وغمرته من الإنعام ما يقصر عن اقتراحه كلُّ أمل، وجعلته فواضلها يقلّب الطّرف بين الخيل والخول، وكانت أموره كلَّ يوم فى نمو وزيادة، وأحواله توفى على البغية والإرادة، إلى أن جرت نوبة اقتضى التدبير فى وقتها أن عُدقت به الوزارة، ونيطت به السفارة، فوسوس له خاطرُه ما زخرَفه البَطَر وزيّنه، وصوره الشيطانُ

وحسَّنه، وأظهر ما ظهرت أمارته، ووضحت أدلّته وعلامته، فاستدعى قبيله وأسرته، وجنسه وعشيرته، بمكاتبات منه سرية، وخطوط عثر عليها بالأرمنية، فكانوا يصلون أول أولَ، إلى أن إجتمع منهم عشرون ألف رجل من فارسٍ وراجل، ومن جملتهم ابنا أخيه وغيرهما من أهله، فدلوا بالغرور، وحملوا على ما قضى بالاستيحاش منه، والنفور، وقوّوا عزمه فيما يؤّدى الى اضطراب الأحوال واختلال الأمور، فامتعض العساكرُ المنصورة مما أساءَ به سياستهم، وأبوا الصبرَ على ما غير به رسمهم وعاداتهم، فلما رأى أمير المؤمنين ذلك استعظم الحال فيه، وتَيقّن أن التفاعُلَ عنه يقضِى بما يعسر استدراكه وتلافيه، فكاتب وليَّه وصفيَّه الذى رُبّى فى حَجْر الخلافة، وسما به استحقاقُه الى أعلى درج الأنافة، وحصلت له الرياسة باكتسابه وانتسابه، وغدا النظر فى أمور المملكة لا يصلُح لغيره ولا يليق الا به، السيدُ الأجلُّ الأفضل، وهو يومئذ والى الأعمال الغربية، وصدرت كتبُ أمير المؤمنين تُشعِره بهذا الأمر الصَّعب، وتستكشِفُ به ما عَرَا الدولةَ من هذا الخَطب فأجاب دعاءه، ولبى نداءه، وقام قيام مثلِه ممن أجزل الله حظّه من الإيمان، وجعله جلَّ وعز حسنة هذا الزمان، واختصَّه بعناية قوية، وأمده بموادَّ علويةٌ، وأيده باعانة سماوية، تخرج عن الاستطاعة البشرية، فجمع الناس وقام خطيباً فيهم، وباعثاً لهم على ما يُزلِفُهم عند الله ويحظيهم، وموضحاً لهم ما يُخشى على الدولة من الأمر المُنكَر، فاجتمعوا إليه كاجتماعهم يوم المحشَر، وغصَّت النُّجود والأغوار، وامتلأت السهول والأعوار، وضَاقتِ الأرض على سعتها بالخلائق، وارتفعت فى توجههم لطلب المذكور الأعذار والعوائق، ولم يبق فضاءٌ إلا وهو بهم شرق، ولا أحد إلا وهو مترعج بقصده وعلى تأخر لك قلق. كان بَهرام وأصحابه بالإضافة إليهم كشامة فى اللون البسيط، وكالقَطرة فى البحر المحِيط، وسارُوا مع السِّيد الأجلِّ الأفضل نحوه مُسارعين، وعلى الإنقضاض عليهم متهافتين، فلما شعر بذلك لم يبقَ لم قرار، ولاذ بالهرب والفرار، يهجُرُ المناهِل، ويطوى المراحل، ويرى الشُّرود غُنما، ويعد السلامة حلما، واستقرت وزارة أمين المؤمنين لهذا السيد االأجل الأفضل الذى لم تزل فيه راغبه، وله خاطبه، ونحو توليه إياها متطلعه، وإلى نظره فيها مبادرة متسرعة ولم تنفك لزينة دستها مستبطئة، وفى التلهف على تأخر ذلك معيدة مبدئه، فأحسن إلى الكافة قولاً وفعلاً.

A long praise of Riḍwān b. Walakhshī's virtues as vizier:

ولما امعن بهرام فى الهرب، وجّدت العسكر المنصورة وراءه فى الطلب، وضاقت عليه المسالك، وتيقن أنه فى كل وجهة يقصدها هالك، عاد لمكارم الدولة وعواطفها ، وسأل أماناً على نفسه من متالفها، فشملته الرحمة، وكتب له الأمان فعاودته النعمة، واختلط برجال العسكر المنصورة، وصار حظه بعد أن كان مبخوسا من الحظوظ الموفورة.

Appendix V. This is to give the reader a very general idea about the divisions and ranks in the Fatimid army and administration from S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 154–157. Recent scholarship will find points of disagreement, but on the whole the inclusion may be useful.
A. Amirs: 1. "gold-chain" amirs; 2. sword-bearers who escorted the caliph on horse-back; 3. ordinary officers.
B. Officers of the guard: 1. masters or the *usdaths* or eunuchs, who were held in great honour and given important positions; 2. young guards or the *ghilmān*—specially trained youths—approximately 500; 3. troops of the caliph's barracks or *ḥujras*—approximately 5000.
C. The regiments named after their ethnic background or their patron (caliph or vizier, like the Juyūshiyya, Maghāriba, Mashāriqa, Afḍaliyya, Barqiyya, the private troops of Ṭalā'i', etc.).
– The state hierarchy was constituted of the "Men of the Sword" and "Men of the Pen":
A. The "Men of the Sword" included: 1. vizier (unless he is a civil man of the pen); 2. high chamberlain or the "lord of the door" that stood next to the vizier; 3. field-marshal (*isfehsalār*) or the commander-in-chief guarding the palace; 4. umbrella-bearer; 5. sword-bearer; 6. lance-bearer; 7. equerries; 8. commandant of Cairo; 9. commandant of Miṣr (Fusṭāṭ).
B. The "men of the Pen" included beside the vizier: 1. chief *qāḍī*; 2. chief *dā'ī*; 3. inspector of the markets (*al-muḥtasib*); 4. treasurer; 5. deputy chamberlain; 6. reader of the Quran—The lower division of the "Men of the Pen" comprised the whole body of the civil servants of the following departments: vizierate, chancery, army pay office, exchequer.
– Outside these court functionaries there were the governors of the four provinces, Qūṣ, al-Gharbiyya, al-Sharqiyya and Alexandria and the officers in the Fatimid-held territories outside Egypt.

Appendix VI. Verses from al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 60.

أقضيب يميس أم هو قدّ / او شقيق يلوح أم هو خدّ

أنا مثل الهلال سقماً عليه / وهو كالبدر حين وافاه سعد

نظرت إليها وهى تنظر ظلّها / فنزّت نفسى عن شريك مقارب

أغار على أعطافها من ثيابها / حذاراً ومن مسك لها فى الذوائب

ولى غيرة لو كان للبدر مثلها / لما كان يرضى باجتماع الكواكب

كم ذا يرينا الدهر من أحداثه / عبراً وفينا الصدّ والإعراض

ننسى المماتَ وليس يجرى ذكره / فينا فتذكرنا به الأمراض

Appendix VII. Verses from the *Dīwān* of Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk. The sources are the two editions by al-Amīnī and Badawī.

Verses from his love poems addressed to youths:

Group 1.*

ومهفهفٍ ثمل القوام سرت إلى / أعطافه النشوات من عينه

ماضى اللحاظ كأنما سلّت يدى / سيفى غداةَ الوع من جفنيه

قد قلت إذ خطّ العذار بمسكة / فى خده ألِفَيهِ لا لاميه

ما الشّعر دبّ بعارضيهِ وإنما / أصداغه نفضت على خديه
الناس طوع يدى وأمرى نافذٌ / فيهم وقلبى الآنَ طوع يديه
فاعجب لسلطان يعمّ بعدلهِ / ويجورسلطان الغرامِ عليه
وا لله لولا اسم الفرارِ وأنه / مستقبح لفررت منه إليهِ

Dīwān Ṭalā'i', ed. A. A. Badawī, 36.

Group 2.*

ولما حضرنا للسباق تبادرت /خيولٌ، ومن أهواه أقدمها سبَقاً
حلى أشقرٍ شبهِ اللهيبِ توقداً / ولوناً؛ فقلنا: البدر قد ركب البقا

*Ibid., 33.

Group 3.*

بأبى شخصك الذى لا يغيب عن عيانى وهو البعيد القريب
يا مقيماً فى الصدر قد خفت أن يؤذيك للقلب حرقة ووجيب
يا مليح القوام عطفاً فقد يعطف فى لينه القضيب الرطيب

Dīwān Ṭalā'i', ed. al-Amīnī, 61–62.

Verse about his faith in and political allegiance to the cause of Imāmism:

Group 4.*

أنا بالأئمة لم أزل متشفعاً /وبغيرهم أنا لست بالمستشفع

Dīwān Ṭalā'i', al-Amīnī, 89.

Group 5.*

-أنا من شيعة الإمام (على) /حرب أعداءه وسلم الولى
-فبه قد هدانى ا لله للحق / فما لى وأى كل غوى
-وأنا منذ كنت أسعى لسادتى /على منهج الصراط السوى
-من دعانى الى الأئمة أسرعت / اليه و لم أكن ببطى

يا ضعيف اليقين إن إعتقادى /فى(على) على يقين قوى
أنا فى القول لا أطيع غوياً / اذ مطيع الغوى نفس الغوى
ذكر آل النبى عندى كالبشرى /وذكرى سواهم كالنعى

*Ibid., 171–172.

أنا سيف دينكم (ابن رزيك) الذى / يرضيكم فى وقت ينتضى

أقرضت فى حبى لكم ما قد غلا /فى حبكم حسنا ومثلى اقرضا

*Ibid., 83–84.

-ولائكم فى ضمير القلب مسكنه /وذكركم فى فمى أحلى من العسل

-ان-ابن رزيك- ذو قلب يواجهكم /من الولاء بوجهٍ منه مقتبل

*Ibid., 109.

قولى: لمن سامنى الرجعى الى /ما لا يجوز اتيت غير جميل

ان الخليل، اذا تجنب مذهبى /قلت: ابتعد ما أنت لى بخليل

-وهم الأئمة ما عدت فضيلةً /فيهم فما ميلى ال المفضول

فأنا اذا مثلت غيرهم بهم /فى فضلهم اخطأت فى تمثيلى

آل النبى بهم عرفنا مشكل/ القرآن، والتوراة والإنجيل

-هم أوضحوا الآيات حتى بينوا / الغايات فى التحريم والتحليل

*Ibid., 111.

Verses on the division of Islam into sects and corruption in the same sect.

Group 6.*

فليس من ملة من الملل ما /صار فى المسلمين من مللِ

ولا جرى فى شريعة سلفت /على اختلاف الأديان والنحل

*Ibid., 122.

Verses addressed to the poet and theologian ʿUmāra al-Yamanī in an attempt to show the latter the truthfulness of his Imāmism:

Group 7.*

قل للفقيه عمارة: يا خير من /أضحى يؤلف خطبة وخطابا

إقبل نصيحة من دعاك إلى الهدى /قل: حطة، وادخل الينا البابا

تلق الأئمة شافعين، لا تجد / إلا لدينا، سنة وكتابا

وعلىّ أن يعلو محلك فى الورى /وإذا شفعت إلىّ كنت مجابا

* A. A. Badawi, Introduction to *Dīwān Ṭalāʾiʿ*, 10.

Verses expressing his discontment about the occupation of the Holy Land by the "infidels" and plea to the Seljuk Nūr ed-dīn Maḥmūd b. Zangī and Gilj Arslan b. Masʿūd to put aside perpetual wars and concentrate on *jihād*.

Group 8.*

رجعتم الى حكم التنافس بينكم /وفيكم من الشحناء نار تضرم

أما عندكم من يتقى الله وحده /أما في رعاياكم من الناس مسلم

تعالوا، لعل الله ينصر دينه / اذ ا ما نصرنا الدين نحن وانتم

وننهض نحو الكافرين بعزمة /بأمثالها تحوى البلاد وتقسم

Dīwān Ṭalā'iʿ, al-Amīnī, 133.

Verses from a message addressed to Usāma about the condition of the Muslim nation while Jerusalem is occupied. He refers to Usāma's heroism and repeats his pleas to persuade Nūr ed-dīn to join forces:

Group 9.*

إنَّ- ظنى، والظن مثل سهام الرمى، منها الخطى ومنها المصيب

إنَّ-هذا لان غدت ساحة القدس وما للسلام فيها نصيب

منزل وحى قبل بعث رسول اللّه فهو المحجوج والمحجوب

نزلت وسطه الخنازير والخمر، وبارى الناقوس فيها الصليب

لو رآه المسيح لم يرضى فعلاً زعموا أنه له منسوب

أبعد الناس عن عبادة ربٍّ- الناس قوم إلههم مصلوب

-وجهاد العدو بالفعل والقول على كل مسلم مكتوب

ولك الرتبة العلية فى الأمرين، مذ كنتَ إذ تشبُّ- الحروب

-قد كتبنا اليك، فأوَح لنا الآن بماذا عن الكتاب تجيب

قصدنا أن يكون منّا ومنكم أجل فى مسيرنا مضروب

فلدينا من العسكر ما ضاق بأدناهم الفضاء الرحيب

*Ibid., 63–65.

Verses about his character and career:

Group 10.*

نحن كا لسحب بالبوارق، والرعد، لدينا الترغيب، والترهيب

تارة نسعر الحروب على الناس وطوراً بالمكرمات نصوب

*Ibid., 62.

أبى اللّه إلا أن يدين لنا الدهر /ويخدمنا فى ملكنا العز والنصر

علمنا بأن المال تفنى ألوفه /ويبقى لنا من بعده الاجر والذكر

خلطنا الندى بابأس حتى كأننا /سحاب لديه البرق والرعد والقطر

ترانا اذا رحنا الى الحرب مرة /قريناً، ومن اسيافنا الذئب والنسر
كما اننا فى السلم نبذل جودنا /ويرتع فى انعامنا العبد والحر

*Ibid., 81.

Verses devoted to his clan, the Banū Ruzzīk:

Group 11.*

فلى نسبان من رزيك بدوْ / ثان بانتسابى للولاء

*Ibid., 52.

فخذ لبنى -رزيك- المظفر مدحة / اذا أنشدت ازرت بدّ الترائب
يعارض من شعر المقلد قوله / (دراك المعالى فى شفار القواضب)

*Ibid., 55.

ندبت إليه عصابة من قبلها / لم تسر آساد الشرى بعرين
من آل-رزيك- الذين بجودهم /وببأسهم خلطوا منى بمنون

*Ibid., 165.

Appendix VIII. The Armenian inscriptions in the White Monastery, as quoted by Ṭeotik, *Everyone's Yearbook*, XVII (1923), 375:

"Թէոդորոս նկարիչ և գրիչ ի գաւառէն Քեսնոյ մերձ ի կամուրջն Ընջեոյ ի գեղջէ որ կոչի Մախթլլէ և հայր իմ Քրիստափոր քարա֊գործ. Ած. նմա ողորմեսցի և ձեզ և մեզ այց արասցէ ամենայն Հայ֊ւոցս որք եմքս ի ծառայութեան յԵգիպտոսի. ի Հայրապետութեանն Տ. Գրիգորի քւերորդւոյ Գրիգորիսի որ Տր. Վահրամն կոչի":

"Տարածողն լոյս ի մետաղս քրէականս ողորմեսցի Քս. Խաչատրոյ":

"Քս. ողորմեսցի Սարգսի...ի մետաղս":

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